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Week ending August 24 1957
Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

TOLD FOR THE FIRST TIME

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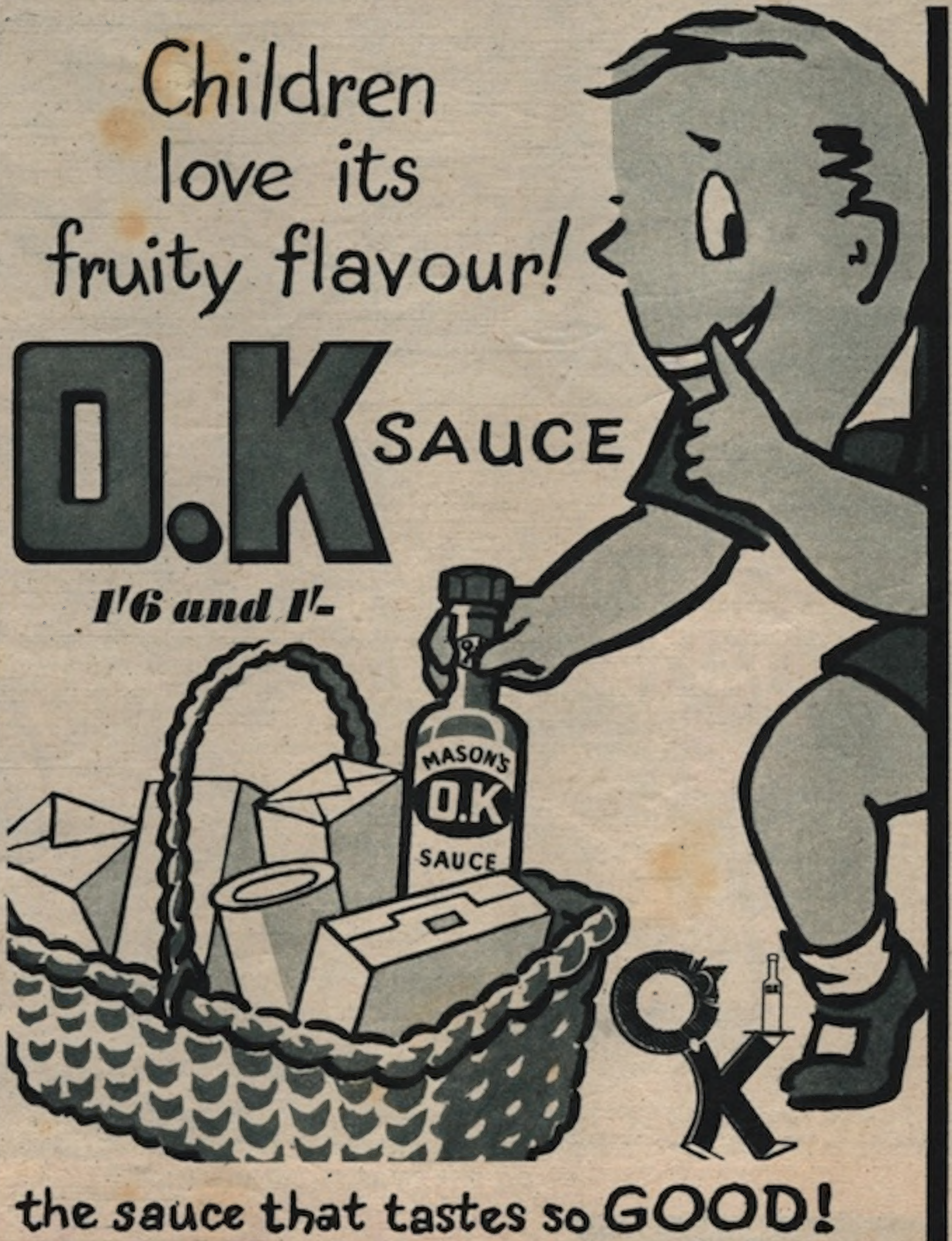
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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Bill Strutton and Michael Pearson solved the jigsaw

A MILE off the coast of north Ceylon, in the shark-haunted Bay of Bengal, a young British naval officer swam silently towards the shore in a top-secret invasion test. As he lay on his back, scissoring his legs beneath the waves, Michael Pearson saw a fin cut through the water near him. "I let out a yell and splashed like mad—then realized that the fin was one of my frogman's flippers. The imagination can play some terrible tricks in the dark."

The darkness and the fear, the stealth and endurance of his service with the Copps—the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties—inspired Pearson to write their story. He began three years ago, then realized after eighteen months that delving for the history of a cloak-and-dagger force was more than enough work for two men. He called in his friend, TV writer Bill Strutton, to help. Their book, *The Secret Invaders*, begins on page 5.

Together, Strutton and Pearson set out on a painstaking routine of inquiries and interviews, piecing together the Copps' jigsaw story. In Whitehall they had access to official records for only a few hours a day. Strutton solved that problem with a tape recorder. "I spent hours muttering into it Service jargon from battle orders and telegrams. Altogether we used thirty thousand feet of tape."

Pearson, now thirty-three, is a precise ex-public school boy who divides his time between writing and business. He and his wife and two children live in an Elizabethan cottage in Sussex. Strutton, at thirty-nine, is a much-travelled Australian whose London flat, where he lives with his wife and son, "often resembles an international railway terminus." He says: "When our friends see Pearson and I together—he the pukka Englishman and I the wild Aussie—they wonder how we ever hit it off."

WHEN Mrs. D. H. Robinson, a fifty-one year old housewife who lives at Bradford, Yorkshire, seeks inspiration for her poems she usually finds it by plunging into a bustling crowd of people. She has a great affection for Blackpool, the subject of the poem on page 22 which she has written under her pen-name of Dorothy Stringer. Mrs. Robinson's first step towards an ambition to become an established poet came in 1953 when she won £25 for forty lines about the Coronation. This year a collection of her poems is being published.

Mrs. Robinson needs inspiration for her poems, but she writes fiction to a strict schedule. After getting breakfast for her family—she has three sons whose ages range from sixteen to twenty-two—she spends the morning planning a short story or adding 2,000 words to a novel. "I have to be ruthless about this," she says. "Housework and raising a family kept me from writing for long enough."

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Free Speech

- **Turning our children into unpaid salesmen**
- **Eating potatoes to slim**
- **Trees inches high from pips and stones**

WHAT a prospect lies before us now that high-pressure salesmen have found our most vulnerable spot!

We buy television sets so that our children won't be left out of conversations at school—and then find them turned into unpaid salesmen with product-plugging jingles instead of nursery rhymes on their lips.

The bright propagandists, from Hitler down, have been softening up children as mouthpieces for years. Fairground people use the same technique, only more candidly, with their: "Cry, baby, cry! Make mother buy!"

Persuasion through children is the most terrifying aspect of our terrifying age. And there is nothing that we can do about it.—T. F., Chigwell, Essex.

Manoeuvrable Cyclists

If O. T., of Shrewsbury, cares to re-examine his argument that motorists should yield to cyclists ("Free Speech," July 27) he will realize that his parallel of steamships giving way to sail on the high seas proves the exact opposite.

A steamship gives way to sail because it is more manoeuvrable. But bicycles can start, stop and change direction far more rapidly than can motor vehicles, particularly heavy ones. The cyclist should therefore be the one to yield.—I. LAMB, Toads Acre, Long Stanton, Cambridge.

Matter Of Costs

While Peter Mostyn's article ("Can You Afford Justice?" JOHN BULL, July 13) was well-founded, it should be remembered that solicitors and barristers rely solely upon costs and fees for their livelihood.

The maximum a solicitor can claim from a losing party for the cost to his client of an expert witness is eight guineas, yet doctors and surveyors often charge ten to fifty guineas a day for giving evidence.

Peter Mostyn cites the case of a man who recovered £17 10s. damages but was faced with a bill for £25 13s. 6d. But I wonder if he was actually asked to pay in full. Many solicitors feel that they can't charge clients more than one-third of the amount recovered, so most of them handle these small cases at heavy losses and rely upon big commercial actions to make them up.—SOLICITOR'S CLERK, London, S.W.6.

Corrected Impression

Short-story writer F. W. Holiday recalls returning from Northern Ireland during the war in an R.A.F. aircraft which carried an unofficial load of rabbits, nylons and a bicycle ("Report From The Editor," JOHN BULL, August 3).

I must correct the impression that there was no rationing in Northern Ireland. Rationing was as strict there both during and after the war as in any other part of the United Kingdom. Rabbits and bicycles were fairly plentiful, but nylons were available only for coupons until clothes rationing ceased.

There were, of course, many people who managed to smuggle such articles across the border from neutral Eire. So perhaps this was the source of the R.A.F.'s "unofficial" supply.—MISS MARY PARRON, Belfast.

Plea For Potatoes

We spend millions a year on research into potato diseases, and merchants are investing more and more in pre-packing potatoes in Polythene. Yet, mainly because of a mistaken idea that potatoes are fattening, the acreage devoted to them is shrinking.

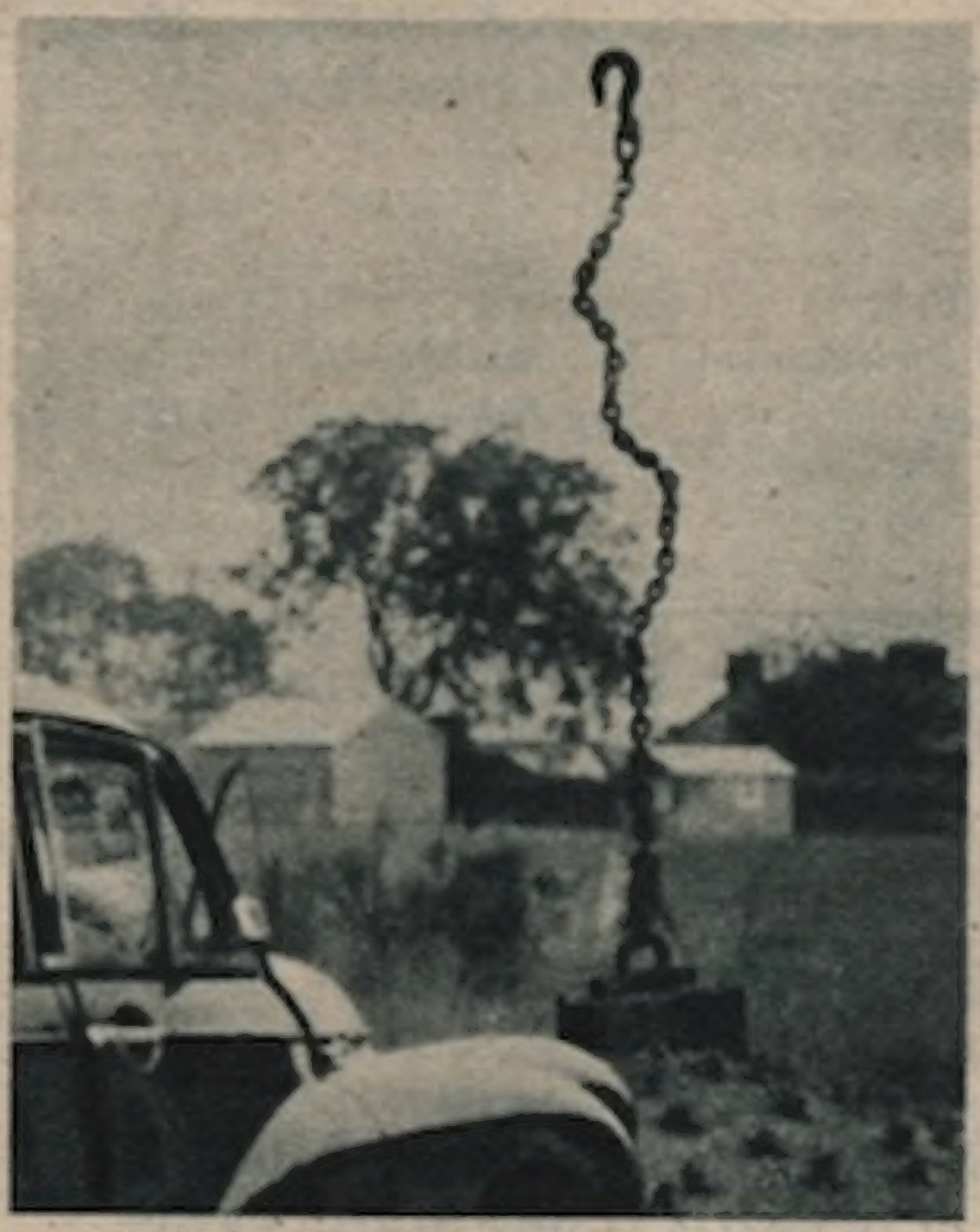
Housewives are scared by published mumbo-jumbo into cutting them out of family diets, but potatoes can be cooked in many ways that don't add an inch to the waistline.—J. F. DAVIS, Preston, Lancashire.

"There is no reason why potatoes shouldn't be used in a slimming diet," says a doctor. "But of course the calories they add rise rapidly when they are cooked in butter or roasted."

"Boiled or steamed potatoes compare favourably with bread, lard and sugar in keeping weight from the waistline," says the Potato Marketing Board. "And they contain more vitamins. Comparative costs per quarter-pound are: bread, 1½d.; lard, 6d.; sugar, 2½d.; and potatoes, ¾d.

Scottish Sky-hook

While motoring through Scotland recently I came across this remarkable sight at Gretna. I was greatly puzzled until I found that the links of the chain had been welded together many years ago by a mischievous local blacksmith.—D. R., Co. Durham.



Booking The Routes

I often wonder why British Railways don't publish cheap handbooks describing places of interest along their tracks. I'm sure that children and many adults would get great pleasure from checking off the names of rivers, bridges and historic buildings as they flash by.—F. A., Cliftonside, Nottingham.

"Most of the railways issued booklets of this kind at prices ranging from threepence to one shilling before the war," says British Railways. "High costs tend to discourage this kind of venture these days, but free pamphlets describing the routes of some expresses are available at station inquiry offices. A series of two-shilling booklets detailing many journeys mile by mile on all but the Eastern Region were published by a private concern ten years ago and some copies may still be available."

Packet Racket

We hear a great deal these days about the decreasing value of the pay packet, but there's another packet racket which helps to send up living expenses.

Many everyday foodstuffs which shopkeepers once weighed before our eyes are now pre-packed by the manufacturers. When I asked for half a pound of biscuits recently I was given a packet which bore, in very small print at the bottom, "minimum weight seven and a half ounces." I asked for a pound of currants and found "net weight twelve ounces" printed on the packet.

Too many of our foods are getting dried, frizzled and frozen—all with a nice extra price added. So watch out, housewives.—ERNEST FLOOK, James Street, Mardy, Rhondda, Glamorgan.

"Few biscuits can be packed to an exact weight every time," says a manufacturer, "and if Mr. Flook had weighed them he might have found more than half a pound there. These hygienic and convenient packing methods are here to stay because the public as a whole is prepared to pay the small extra cost involved."

"We have pressed for the elimination of deceptive packs," says the National Federation of Retail Grocers, "and for a ban on odd weights. We would also like to see net weights marked more conspicuously and we consider that the use of ambiguous terms like 'monster' and 'giant' to describe sizes should be outlawed."

Sticky Gift Problems

Frank Shaw, of Liverpool, may sigh for the days when shopkeepers gave children gifts ("Free Speech," July 27) but I am fed up with the practice here in Germany.

Rather than defy shrieks of protest from my three children I have struggled back from town clutching three enormous balloons or watching anxiously as the youngsters solemnly chewed cold sausages or chocolate biscuits in my immaculate pram. I am glad that this gift-giving practice has ended in Britain.—MRS. J. DELAHUNT, British Army of the Rhine.

Forced Lending

When a Dominion Government for which I worked overcharged me income tax it added three per cent interest to the refund I got the following year. But now that I regularly overpay British income tax, which is deducted at source, I never get interest on the money which I have been forced to lend the British Government for a whole year.—J. M., Austria.

"There is no law which requires us to add interest to income tax refunds," says the Inland Revenue. "But legislation introduced in 1947 enables us to charge three per cent interest to people who owe us £1,000 or more for more than three months."

Trees In Miniature

I was sorry to read that A. L., of Cheshire, can't make date stones sprout ("Free Speech," July 27). I have grown miniature trees from orange, apple and grapefruit pips; peach and apricot stones; beech nuts and acorns—and even from grape seeds.

You keep the pips in water for three days and plant them in very small pots of sand on a sunny window sill, watering sparingly every morning. The secret of keeping them miniature instead of straggly is to snip the roots off with scissors as they grow up the sides of the pots and out at the top.

These little trees often flower and will even bear tiny fruit.—MRS. S. ATKINSON, Chatham, Kent.

. . . To make an unusual hanging basket, soften date stones in water for a week and put them into the holes of a moistened sponge hung in a warm room. If kept moist the stones send out long slender leaves to cover the sponge with bright green foliage which lasts for months.—MRS. STELLA SHEPHARD, Royal George Road, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

IN some countries of the East there are still people who keep kites flying over their houses all night, because they believe that this frightens off the evil spirits. In rural England, however, you need a better excuse than that for trampling over the cabbage patch: for today nothing less than a flying saucer would stir the countryman from his day's work or his night's rest. Why then this fascination for an oriental magic that first cast its spell three thousand years ago? Cover artist Ditton doesn't know the answer: to him it's yet another mystery of the jet age.

JOHN BULL
THE SECRET INVADERS

A story of skill and courage . . . the tense drama of the silent men who probed enemy beaches before the Allied armies went in

THE SECRET INVADERS

by **BILL STRUTTON** and **MICHAEL PEARSON**

LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER WILLMOTT was always first to appear at the swimming pool at his Cairo club. A straight raw-boned man, a little ungainly in stride, he arrived early in the morning when the pool was deserted. He had dreamy grey eyes. He brooded solemnly over the water awhile, put his feet together on the board, then tensed his pale body, plunged and started his twenty-five laps.

For a few laps he went at it in his dogged overarm and then, puffing a bit, rolled on to his back and took it easy while his legs threshed up a foam.

Eventually, he thought, *I'll be able to swim for miles like this, on my back.* Well, maybe not miles—not in heavy clothing, hung about like a Christmas tree with a pistol and a knife and a torch and purses of odds and ends.

He would think out all the details of his idea, and all the snags, on his morning swim, because now he was close to the problem. Was this the best way to come into a beach—on his back, throwing a peep over his shoulder now and then to see where he was going? Or was it better to breast-stroke his way in?

At the other end an Arab boy crossed slowly, trailing a broom. He let it drop with a hollow clatter, dug in the folds of his *galabeah,* and squatted, winding up a clockwork doll. He sat the doll down and watched it goosestep drunkenly while it whirred and clicked on the floor.

It is dark, Willmott imagined. *This is a sentry, and I can't see him yet, though now and then I might hear him. Above all, he is not to see me.*

Carefully he thrust out his arms under the

Deftly, Willmott and Courtney paddled away. Ahead lay the port, the guarded beaches—and a night packed with danger

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

In the film *The Cruel Sea*, Sinden played opposite Virginia McKenna. Women have voted his face "the one we'd most like to see at the breakfast table"

Sinden with Ava Gardner and Grace Kelly (right) on the set of *Mogambo*. He and the director disagreed over the part he played

Road To Rome was described as virile and authoritative.

Nobody has seriously called his off-stage manner authoritative. A quiet, middle-aged woman from North Shields who had won a magazine competition travelled to Pinewood Studios one day to have lunch with Sinden as part of her prize. During the meal, in the studio restaurant, she accidentally knocked a portion of food on the floor. "Don't worry. I'll find it when I clean up in the morning," joked Sinden, hoping to put her at ease. For a moment she studied him doubtfully. Then she declared: "They should be ashamed to make you do it."

Sinden's tractability is well known to those connected with him. One wit suggested that his name should not be Sinden but Cinders. In the words of William Beasley, the stage door keeper at the Garrick Theatre, London: "Mr. Sinden is a really obliging gentleman." A former employee puts it this way: "He is easily pushed around."

Despite his unprovocative nature, Sinden exposes himself to punishment, "usually for my own good," at a greater number of bazaars, fêtes, and other social functions than most actors. He was violently abused by a jealous mother at a baby show when he awarded the prize to another woman's child. At one garden party, teenagers who had paid to be photographed with him insisted on kissing him as the shutter clicked. Later he discovered why people had sniggered at him on the journey home. His face was smothered with lipstick.

A short time ago he was approached by a man who had promised to provide a speaker at a London University students' meeting. Sinden agreed to speak about films and the theatre for a quarter of an hour. When they arrived at the building the man disclosed that the time allocated was an hour. Meekly, Sinden allowed himself to be led to an imposing room where he started to talk his way grimly through the sixty minutes. Long before the time was up he could think of nothing more to say, so he asked for questions.

The students broke their silence gleefully. One asked: "How do you compare the northern and southern dramas of the Chinese theatre during the Mongol epoch?" Similarly awkward questions followed. "I hadn't the faintest idea what they were talking about," says Sinden.

When he did once raise objection on a professional issue, the outcome was yet more embarrassment. For the African adventure picture *Mogambo* he was cast as a studious Englishman who nearly lost his wife on safari to a muscular American hunter, played by Clark Gable. It was not until he had accepted the part that Sinden met John Ford, the American who was to direct the film, and realized that Ford intended to make the Englishman look an utter coward and a silly ass. Ford would not have it any other way.

Patriotic in his feelings, Sinden did his best in each sequence to counter Ford's influence on the character. "The result was probably the weakest performance in my film career," he says.

SINDEN's wife Diana, a lithe, handsome woman with a purposeful manner, has been called the power behind his professional achievement. "She is basically far more ambitious than I," says Sinden. Formerly on the stage as Diana Mahony, she gave up her own career soon after their marriage to concentrate on championing the rights of her unforceful husband. She now has the additional job of minding their two young sons, Jeremy, who is seven, and Marcus, who is three.

To the frustration of the publicists Sinden has emerged from his rare mentions in the news columns of the national newspapers as a settled and quite unsensational family man. A year ago he was called to give evidence in a court case over a motoring incident in which he had been concerned. Another motorist was accused of dangerous driving. Counsel for the defence rose to cross-question the actor. "I understand you had a very attractive lady in front with you," he said. "Were you engrossed in conversation?"

"She was my wife," replied Sinden gravely. "We have been married eight years."

The Sindens live in a small semi-detached house with yellow paintwork at Hampstead Garden Suburb. A keen "do-it-yourself" man, Sinden decorates while his wife administrates. His attitude to the purchasable things in life is modest. He borrows tools on a lease-lend basis from a neighbour who plays the oboe.

Sinden flatly refuses to discuss his money with anyone. His present film contract is said to be worth between £50 and £60 a week. He is a careful spender but, according to Mrs. Joan Gooding who was at one time housekeeper for the Sindens, he is not mean. She says that he lives in dread of imposing on people. When she offered to baby-sit for the Sindens recently, he was reluctant to go out at first because he thought she might tackle a pile of ironing that was in the kitchen. When Mrs. Gooding promised not to touch it, he went. But he took the iron with him in the car.

Jack Keates, a theatre manager in Brighton, says that he will never forget Sinden's first professional stage appearance at the age of seventeen. Sinden was then living with his mother and his father, a chemist, near Brighton, and spending some time studying wood carving.

"He was awful," says Keates. "Two actresses in the play almost walked out because he was so bad." But he was enthusiastic and never resented criticism.

Day after day Sinden spent long sessions learning to intonate his lines under the tutorship of Winifred Shelley, who was producing plays. She had to teach him word for word. Charles F. Smith, a theatre lover and impresario, encouraged Sinden to join the Webber-Douglas Drama School in London. Walter Johnston-Douglas, the principal, says that Sinden was not a brilliant pupil.

After several seasons in Shakespearean productions with the Bristol and London Old Vics, Sinden was given a small part in *The Heiress* at the Haymarket Theatre, London. He was the only member of the cast who never missed a performance during the eighteen months run of the production.

Charles Frend, who directed *The Cruel Sea*, cast Sinden in the film after watching him take the part of a Brazilian in a play called *Red Letter Day*. At first he thought that Sinden *was* a Brazilian. "I was wrong about that," says Frend. "But I was right about going backstage to find out."

Sinden was so overcome when he saw his name heading the credits with Jack Hawkins's at the première of his first picture that he sat through the programme in a daze and had to see it again when it came to his local cinema on general release.

Sinden's attitude has never moved up-stage. Once, while he was making a personal appearance at a large suburban cinema, the microphone ceased to work. Nonplussed, he looked for assistance. None came. He tried shouting. Nobody heard. Finally, to his amazement, an attendant walked slowly down the centre aisle selling ices. Sinden showed no annoyance, either at the time or later.

Instead, he apologized to the few people in the stalls who could hear him, reached over the footlights and bought an ice cream. THE END

Donald Sinden takes stardom gently

by *ALAN LLOYD*

He's the quiet celebrity who refuses to push himself forward. Even his fans hardly know what he looks like

Shortly after he was signed for his first film part in *The Cruel Sea*, Donald Sinden was detailed to attend a press conference with other members of the cast and the production team. Anxious because he had never been to a press conference before, he asked an experienced film man what line he should take with the newspaper people.

"Nothing to it," he was told. "Just tell them about yourself, the picture and the film company—in that order. You can't go wrong."

Sinden entered the conference room. Beyond a crowd of fast-talking men and women stood a girl who appeared to be alone. Apprehensively, he made his way across to her and began his line of patter.

"But I know all about it," she said with a grin. "I'm from the overseas department of the company, not from the press." Sinden's first attempt at being a "film star" ended as a joke at his own expense.

In the five years that have followed, Sinden has done workmanlike jobs in fourteen pictures (including *Doctor In the House*, *Simba*, *Above Us The Waves* and *Tiger In The Smoke*), but has repeatedly fluffed the day-to-day business of being a film celebrity. He has an unassertive disposition and an apparent fear of offending people which are unusual among film stars.

One exasperated producer called him into his office and told him: "You are a star in this film. Start throwing your weight about a bit." Sinden obediently went back to the set and issued his first order to a couple of studio electricians. The unprintable answer he received discouraged him from ever trying again.

"Perhaps I'd get on quicker if I pushed myself forward," he says. "But I simply cannot do it. If the only way to be a success is to throw your weight about, I'd rather not be a success."

Sinden's mild appearance as a boy prompted the late Sir Frank Brangwyn, an artist who lived in the same Sussex village of Ditchling, to use him as a model for paintings of Christ the child. Sinden is now a scraggy six-footer with an agreeable smile and is prone to the dreamy lapses of an absent-minded professor. The result of a poll recently taken among women cinemagoers in this country was: "Sinden's is the face we'd most like to see across the breakfast table." Friends agree that he would probably suffer a breakfast of cold porridge, underdone eggs and burned toast without complaining.

Although his admirers insist that Sinden has as much to offer as some of the big names of the film world, he has played second man in almost all his pictures. Once, when he did have the male lead, his leading lady was an alligator called Daisy.

At the studios he is looked upon as a competent actor who will do what he is told without tantrums, tetchiness, and other self-important tactics. "Temperamental actors and actresses should have gone out with the thirties," he says. "The film industry can't afford such luxuries today."

Many people who have seen him on the screen have little idea what he really looks like. Sinden has seldom looked the same in any two films. His naturally brown hair has been coloured black and blond, and he has appeared clean shaven and with a variety of moustaches at different times. A film reporter who had seen every one of his pictures talked to him for fifteen minutes at the studios without knowing who he was.

Some of Sinden's supporters say that the pictures he has recently appeared in have been too poor to do him any good, and that he badly needs another *The Cruel Sea* or a *Doctor In The House*. One critic complained because he appeared in so many "cissy parts."

By contrast, his television performance earlier this year as Hannibal in Robert Sherwood's *The*

The Sindens live in a small semi-detached house in a London suburb. Sinden says of his wife: "She is far more ambitious than I"

With Muriel Pavlow, Sinden is now acting in a West End comedy, *Odd Man In*. It is his first appearance on the stage for five years

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To the frustration of the publicists Sinden has emerged from his rare mentions in the news columns of the national newspapers as a settled and quite unsensational family man. A year ago he was called to give evidence in a court case over a motoring incident in which he had been concerned. Another motorist was accused of dangerous driving. Counsel for the defence rose to cross-question the actor. "I understand you had a very attractive lady in front with you," he said. "Were you engrossed in conversation?"

"She was my wife," replied Sinden gravely. "We have been married eight years."

The Sindens live in a small semi-detached house with yellow paintwork at Hampstead Garden Suburb. A keen "do-it-yourself" man, Sinden decorates while his wife administrates. His attitude to the purchasable things in life is modest. He borrows tools on a lease-lend basis from a neighbour who plays the oboe.

Sinden flatly refuses to discuss his money with anyone. His present film contract is said to be worth between £50 and £60 a week. He is a careful spender but, according to Mrs. Joan Gooding who was at one time housekeeper for the Sindens, he is not mean. She says that he lives in dread of imposing on people. When she offered to baby-sit for the Sindens recently, he was reluctant to go out at first because he thought she might tackle a pile of ironing that was in the kitchen. When Mrs. Gooding promised not to touch it, he went. But he took the iron with him in the car.

Jack Keates, a theatre manager in Brighton, says that he will never forget Sinden's first professional stage appearance at the age of seventeen. Sinden was then living with his mother and his father, a chemist, near Brighton, and spending some time studying wood carving.

"He was awful," says Keates. "Two actresses in the play almost walked out because he was so bad." But he was enthusiastic and never resented criticism.

Day after day Sinden spent long sessions learning to intonate his lines under the tutorship of Winifred Shelley, who was producing plays. She had to teach him word for word. Charles F. Smith, a theatre lover and impresario, encouraged Sinden to join the Webber-Douglas Drama School in London. Walter Johnston-Douglas, the principal, says that Sinden was not a brilliant pupil.

After several seasons in Shakespearean productions with the Bristol and London Old Vics, Sinden was given a small part in *The Heiress* at the Haymarket Theatre, London. He was the only member of the cast who never missed a performance during the eighteen months run of the production.

Charles Frend, who directed *The Cruel Sea*, cast Sinden in the film after watching him take the part of a Brazilian in a play called *Red Letter Day*. At first he thought that Sinden *was* a Brazilian. "I was wrong about that," says Frend. "But I was right about going backstage to find out."

Sinden was so overcome when he saw his name heading the credits with Jack Hawkins's at the première of his first picture that he sat through the programme in a daze and had to see it again when it came to his local cinema on general release.

Sinden's attitude has never moved up-stage. Once, while he was making a personal appearance at a large suburban cinema, the microphone ceased to work. Nonplussed, he looked for assistance. None came. He tried shouting. Nobody heard. Finally, to his amazement, an attendant walked slowly down the centre aisle selling ices. Sinden showed no annoyance, either at the time or later.

Instead, he apologized to the few people in the stalls who could hear him, reached over the footlights and bought an ice cream. THE END

DEAD ON THE DOORSTEP

by JOHN NIELD

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

Clarence wasn't allowed to be untidy—not with his sister about. That went for the murderer, too

MURDER or no murder, Clarence Abel went for his walk on the heath. Over the past few months he had established his retirement routine and nothing was to throw it out of gear, not even a murder on his doorstep—or more accurately on the doorstep of the Beresford house over the way.

In the wide-skied loneliness of the heath he emptied his mind of everything and quite forgot what had happened until he turned the corner again into the concrete strip labelled Woodland Crescent. At the far end a few official-looking cars were parked and there was a huddle of young men in raincoats, some with cameras strung about them. Clarence walked towards the group and turned in to his own house. At the gateway opposite a policeman stood stolidly gazing at nothing.

Although there was a row of bungalows on each side of the concrete strip, there were trees which obscured them completely from each other and from the road. The Abels' bungalow stood right at the end of the cul-de-sac.

Clarence's sister opened the door; despite the upset of the afternoon she was quite unperturbed. She had been the matron of a large hospital and sudden death had long been mere routine to her. "Anything happening?" she asked. She was six feet tall, white-haired, massive-bosomed, upright as a Grenadier Guard.

"There's a crowd of cars and people," said Clarence, tip-toeing on to the mat and standing on first one foot and then the other to remove his shoes. "Reporters and police, I suppose."

"They've been over here," said his sister, handing him his slippers. "I told them exactly what happened, and they took it all down."

"And Mrs. Beresford?" queried her brother in a whisper, nodding his head towards the closed lounge door.

"She's gone," said his sister in anything but a whisper. "Her mother came and took her away. She was quite herself again, and was very sorry for breaking down like that. I told her not to worry, but just to keep a stiff upper lip and make the best of things."

She glanced at the clock; everything was ready, the kettle steamed on its ring, the pot stood invitingly opened; it was a minute or two to five; tea was at five; they waited. When the hand of the clock trembled on five, Miss Abel made a thankful dive for the kettle.

"I suppose they didn't get the man," said Clarence, drinking with little sighs of pleasure.

"Not a trace," said his sister. "I expect he made off into the fields." There was a timid ring at the bell. "Oh bother. . . . I'll go."

AN elderly man, with a pinched red nose and a vague lost manner, stood outside, holding a drooping umbrella. "I'm sorry to trouble you, ma'am," he said nervously, "but I'm afraid I'm from the police. Pallett—Chief Inspector Pallett, ma'am. I wonder if I might ask a few questions?"

"We've already told all we know," said Miss Abel. "But you'd better come in, I suppose."

Mr. Pallett looked at the spotless hall. "Would you mind if I took my shoes off out here? I shouldn't like to walk in with all this dirt."

"There's no need for that," said Miss Abel, almost beaming at him. Then she glanced down at his shoes and altered her mind. "Well, perhaps it would be better. I'll get you a pair of my brother's slippers."

She bustled off, and presently the wearer of the slippers was ushered into the presence of their owner.

"Sit down, sit down," Miss Abel commanded briskly. The chief inspector looked round as if he'd never seen a chair before. Miss Abel wrestled his depressed-looking brolly from him. "I'll put this outside," she said firmly.

"Oh, dear," said the inspector, watching the going of it forlornly, as if it left him quite

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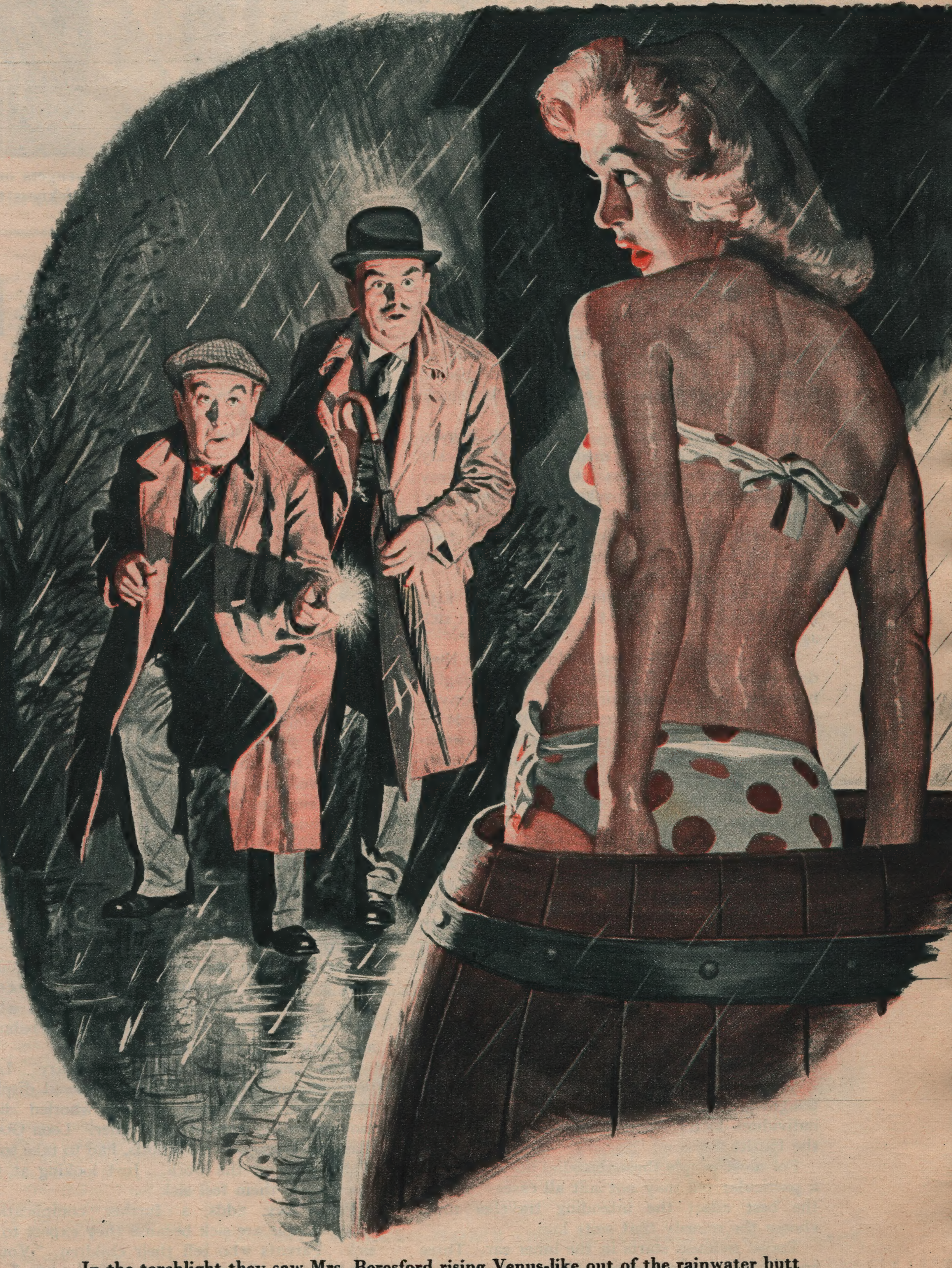


In the torchlight they saw Mrs. Beresford rising Venus-like out of the rainwater butt

The crew of the Mayflower II took sample travel sickness tablets with them across the Atlantic

Tablets are often given to passengers on long-distance coach journeys. Women and children are more susceptible to travel sickness than men. Babies and old people are almost immune

The battle to soothe your travel

by KEITH ELLIS

To avoid that sickness, some travellers drink vinegar and some wear brown paper belts. Science comes up with pills—and profits

EARLY last year the Oxford and Cambridge Far Eastern Expedition, travelling overland from London to Singapore, had safely reached the banks of the Salween River in Burma. The country ahead was infested with Kuomintang Chinese and the Burmese Government insisted that the expedition should take a bodyguard of armed police.

The trucks plunged and pranced along the switchback roads, now swerving round tight corners, now swooping from six thousand foot high ridges. No bullets whistled from snipers' rifles. But trouble came from an unexpected source. Two of the escort turned a sickly shade of green.

Tall, amiable Antony Barrington Brown, who was in charge of the medicine chest, quickly diagnosed travel sickness. Calling the convoy to a halt, he took out a packet of manufacturers' samples and gave to each of the sufferers a tiny white pill. They swallowed them and took swigs of water. Ten minutes later they had recovered completely.

"The roads ahead were even worse," says Barrington Brown, "but the police weren't sick again."

The Burmese policemen could attribute their deliverance to the war that is now raging between the manufacturers of rival travel-sickness remedies. Every week thousands of samples go out—to sailing clubs for seasick week-end sailors; to motor clubs for car-sick rally drivers; to soccer, cricket, athletic and rugger clubs whose members are sometimes made unfit for foreign matches by bumpy air trips.

Travel sickness remedies are drawing bumper profits from the postwar travel boom. Last year an estimated 25 million tablets were sold in this country, probably the highest consumption per head in the world. Although parents of small children who get car-sick form the largest single market, air, shipping and coach companies buy tablets as a service to passengers, and all three armed services stock them.

Many of the remedies can be bought at any chemist's shop. These include Kwells, Marzine, Sealegs and Sereen. Others such as Phenergan, Avomine, Anthisan and Dramamine can be bought only on a prescription. It is up to the individual doctor whether he issues them under the Health Service.

For most people these remedies do work. But a particular pill may not suit all cases. To get the best effect the intending traveller must choose the remedy that suits him.

Travel sickness starts in the inner ear. Three cunningly arranged tubes, acting as the body's spirit levels, detect movement and pass on their findings to the brain. The brain tells the muscles how to react. Normally the system works well and, by unconscious adjustment, the body keeps its balance.

But human beings were never meant to stand the rolling, pitching, lurching, plunging movements involved in rapid travel. The spirit levels respond violently. The brain panics and produces the symptoms of travel sickness—pallor, drowsiness, nausea and, in extreme cases, vomiting.

The eyes also play a part. Objects rushing past a window, swaying curtains in an ocean liner, a landscape that suddenly tilts up when an aeroplane banks, confuse the sense of balance and may bring on sickness.

Actual motion may not be necessary. Last year one remedy manufacturer ordered display cards which consisted of two whorled discs moving crazily against each other. Leon Goodman, who designed the whorls, had to take some of his girls off the work. Just looking at the discs made them feel sick.

Psychology adds a further complication. Many people are sick because they expect to be sick. Parents who tell their children, "You're not going to be sick, *are* you?" may help to bring on sickness. Claustrophobia, the fear of being confined in a small space—a car, a cabin or a sleeping-berth—also encourages sickness in some people.

Most baffling of all are what scientists call conditioned reflexes. Once a person has been travel sick, the sights, sounds and smells associated with his experience may be enough to start him off again. That is why many people feel queasy when they see a rough sea in a film or go aboard a stationary ship to say goodbye to a friend.

THE original experience may have nothing to do with actual movement. One doctor, employed by a leading drug house, wondered why he suffered only on tramcars. After prolonged self-analysis he remembered that the trouble dated from his student days when he had taken trams from his South London lodgings to the university examination rooms. Examination worries made him feel sick on these trips; ever since, the symptoms have returned when he has boarded a tram.

Travellers can do much to stave off sickness. They should avoid upsetting their stomachs before the journey with fizzy drinks, heavy meals or alcoholic farewell parties. Once on board, a

Actress Janette Scott (second from left) was reported to have been airsick in the "flying" sequence in *Peter Pan*. So one drug firm sent her tablets

The Oxford and Cambridge Far Eastern Expedition gave travel pills to armed Burmese policemen who became sick while on escort duty

standing or lying position is theoretically best. Sitting crouched over a book has been proved to be the worst. Opening a window sometimes helps. So does concentrating on something. Air pilots and rally drivers who have been entirely happy at the controls often become violently sick when travelling as passengers.

Position in the vehicle is important. In the front seat of a car or in an amidships cabin in a ship there is less movement than in other positions. Some years ago, Dr. Ludwig G. Lederer, medical adviser to an American airline, asked hostesses to report which passengers most often used their paper bags. The answer was overwhelming: those sitting in left-hand window seats behind the wing.

Lederer deduced that these people were more aware of the plane's movement because they could see the ground or clouds flashing from under the wing. Also, because planes usually bank to the left, the same passengers got the most stomach-raising view of the tilting landscape when the aircraft turned. Lederer now advises all passengers with a tendency to travel sickness to avoid these seats.

Throughout the ages men have looked for a travel sickness cure. Some have recommended drinking a mixture of vinegar and salt, sucking a lemon or chewing raw pork fat. Others have sworn by electric belts, brown paper wrapped round the stomach or an eye patch on one eye coupled with cotton-wool in the opposite ear.

The latest superstition is a chain hanging from the back of a car. A high proportion of cars carries them and astute manufacturers are marketing them for as much as 12s. 6d. each. The theory is that they discharge the static electricity which a car in motion collects. But doctors agree that static electricity does not cause car sickness. When a chain cures it the effect is purely psychological

The search for a scientific cure for travel sickness started in the middle of the last war. Military planners realized that schemes for an invasion of Europe might be jeopardized if the assault troops were prostrated with seasickness.

A group of doctors, headed by Herbert Holling, now of the Medical Research Council's scientific staff, found that some drugs of the belladonna group gave good protection. The best of these was hyoscine, which became—and has remained—the standard sickness remedy of all three services. Ex-Servicemen, impressed with its properties, wrote after the war to the drug firm which supplied it and asked for supplies for holiday use. The firm had anticipated the demand and was soon in full-scale production of its own brand of hyoscine. For years hyoscine was regarded as the only reliable remedy.

One day in 1947, Dr. Mark McEvedy, then a temporary major in the R.A.M.C., was doing his rounds in a troopship's sick quarters. The sea was rough and most of the patients were more or less seasick. But McEvedy noticed that the few who were under treatment with anti-histamine drugs were immune. As an experiment, he gave anti-histamine to men reporting seasick. Many said that the drug helped.

A few months later he decided to test the effectiveness of one of the anti-histamines—Anthisan—against hyoscine. Choosing days when at least one in ten of the troops was seasick, he gave to each man requiring attention one hyoscine tablet and one Anthisan tablet. Half of them took the hyoscine immediately and half the Anthisan. They were told to take the other tablet four hours later. He also gave them a form, to be filled in next day, on which they had to state which of the two drugs they would prefer if they were seasick again. In this and subsequent tests fifty-one voted for Anthisan; forty-two preferred hyoscine.

Later, McEvedy wrote: "Subsequent experience in the treatment of several hundred cases of seasickness with Anthisan has convinced me that, with the aid of this remedy and a strong friend, almost all seasick patients can be got up on deck—even when hyoscine has failed."

Many motorists hang chains from their cars to discharge static electricity, which they think causes car sickness. Doctors say that it doesn't

Although they could be obtained only on prescription, Anthisan and similar drugs became a popular remedy both in Britain and America. But they had disadvantages. They made many people drowsy and even blurred their vision. They were thus unsuitable for drivers or anyone in charge of machinery. The major pharmaceutical houses tested other drugs in the hope of finding one that worked equally well but without distressing side effects.

Drugs poured out of the laboratories. To choose the best for their men, the American armed forces tested twenty-eight different compounds on 16,920 Servicemen on fifteen different Atlantic crossings.

The report of Dr. Herman I. Chinn, the principal investigator, revolutionized medical thought on travel sickness. For long voyages hyoscine was discredited. Chinn found that meclozine, cyclizine and promethazine were most effective. Meclozine had the advantage of having to be taken only once a day (the others had to be taken three times daily) and promethazine had the disadvantage of sometimes producing drowsiness. Chinn concluded that meclozine was the best drug for long voyages but that all three were equally good for short ones. He also conceded that hyoscine gave good protection on short trips and in small doses had no significant side effects.

Most doctors would add that Dramamine and similar drugs may be useful when the patient needs a sedative as well as a sickness cure. They advise that tablets should be taken before starting the journey. Once vomiting has begun it is often difficult to hold down an anti-sickness dose long enough for it to take effect.

Although no drug will prevent everybody's travel sickness, there is one certain preventive. Recently a company director had to make a trip to Paris. He was a bad traveller and he knew that the sea crossing would make him ill for days. He chartered a private plane, but he was sick almost as soon as it left the airport and he ordered the pilot to turn back. It seemed that he would have to cancel his trip.

Then he had a brainwave. He hired a doctor, who gave him a general anaesthetic as soon as he boarded the cross-Channel boat at Dover. The doctor watched over his unconscious body during the crossing and supervised his revival at Calais. The doctor then had a few days' holiday in Paris before anaesthetizing the director for the return crossing. The patient truly could say: "I never felt a thing."

THE END

September Moon

Tim wasn't a clumsy boy any more. He could cope with the harvest, the gipsies—even Marianne

by JOHN MOORE

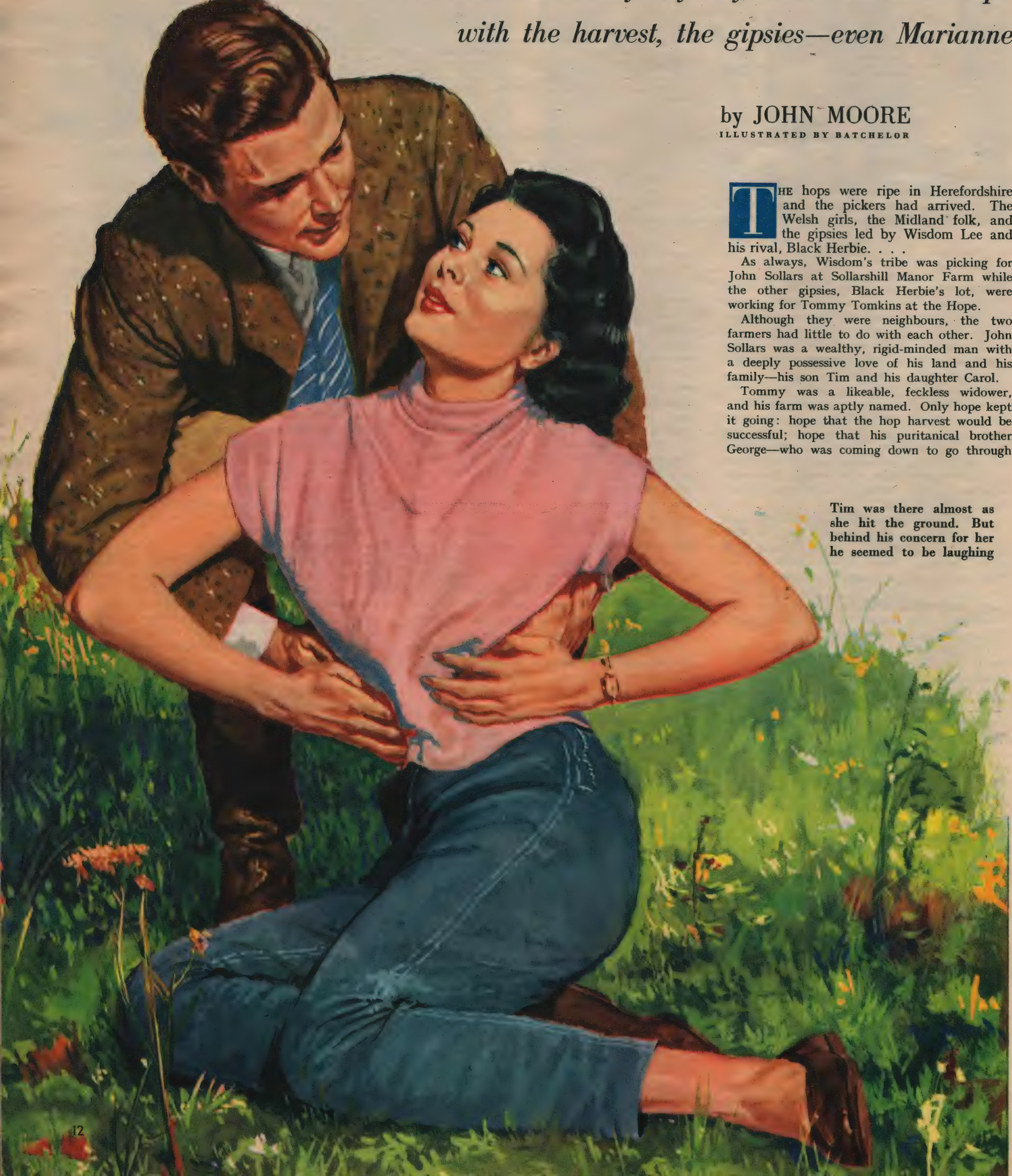
ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR

THE hops were ripe in Herefordshire and the pickers had arrived. The Welsh girls, the Midland folk, and the gipsies led by Wisdom Lee and his rival, Black Herbie. . . .

As always, Wisdom's tribe was picking for John Sollars at Sollarshill Manor Farm while the other gipsies, Black Herbie's lot, were working for Tommy Tomkins at the Hope.

Although they were neighbours, the two farmers had little to do with each other. John Sollars was a wealthy, rigid-minded man with a deeply possessive love of his land and his family—his son Tim and his daughter Carol.

Tommy was a likeable, feckless widower, and his farm was aptly named. Only hope kept it going: hope that the hop harvest would be successful; hope that his puritanical brother George—who was coming down to go through



Tim was there almost as she hit the ground. But behind his concern for her he seemed to be laughing

the farm's accounts—could be dissuaded from foreclosing the mortgage.

Perhaps, Tommy thought, his daughter Marianne, with the charming vivacity she had inherited from her French mother, would win George over. But he rather doubted it. George, who worked at the Ministry of Education, had a heart of stone—unlike Tommy, whose heart had always been too soft.

It was Tommy's soft-heartedness with his hop-pickers that started all the trouble. Flattered and cajoled by Black Herbie, Tommy agreed to pay one and fourpence a bushel to the pickers—although he knew that the rate, fixed by a meeting of local farmers, was only one and two. . . .

That night, when the rival gipsy gangs met in the Royal Victoria, Black Herbie was full of himself. "You want to look after your people," he told Wisdom Lee condescendingly. "Letting your poor people pick for one and two."

And he boasted of the rate Tommy had agreed to pay. "We shook hands on it, didn't we, Betsy?" he demanded of his wife.

"They shook hands on it," Betsy said, and there was a sudden silence in the bar. . . .

PART TWO

'Herbie's The Feller'

DURING Herbie's speech the Smiths and Manasseh's lot had been gathering in a circle round Wisdom and him. They were aware of a challenge thrown out, a challenge accepted.

If Herbie had really got one and four for his people, then it demonstrated that Herbie was cleverer, bolder, more cunning, more powerful than Wisdom. Black Herbie went up, Wisdom went down.

"Don't believe it," Wisdom said at last. Black Herbie was boasting, Black Herbie was shooting his mouth. If John Sollars, who was rich, would only pay one and two, then it stood to reason that Tommy Tomkins, who was poor, could not pay one and four.

"It's just his talk," said Marta, loyal to Wisdom but sounding just a shade doubtful, as though wondering whether Harry would be so foolish as to make a boast that could be easily disproved.

"So it's just Herbie's talk. Young missies!" cried Herbie, raising his hat with an air as he spoke across the room to the Welsh girls who stood there—"young missies, you that sings so pretty, what's the rate for the hop-picking up at Mr. Tomkins's farm?"

The Welsh girls drew together, alarmed. They chittered among themselves, and one whispered: "Drunk he is. Come, Megan." She tugged at Megan's arm and they began to move towards the door.

Marta in triumph swung round to speak to the gipsies behind her: "There! You can see he's a liar. I said it was just talk."

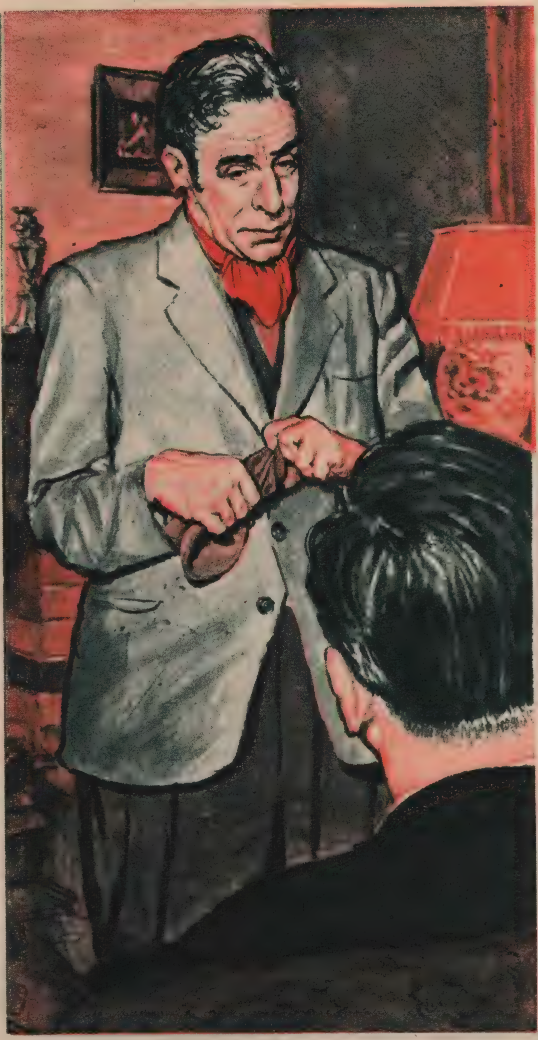
She spoke too soon. Herbie pranced after the girls, and the one called Megan, perhaps in fear of him or perhaps because she felt safe now as the gipsies parted to let her through the door, called out in a voice as clear as a blackbird's: "One and fourpence a basket, Mr. Tomkins said we should have."

Then the girls scuttled out; and the room fell so quiet that Mrs. Agnew stopped in the middle of drawing a pint of cider and looked up in alarm. No one stirred, however, except Marta, who moved swiftly to Wisdom's side.

Then Herbie let out a kind of yell. It was a horrible squawk of triumph, shattering the silence. "Herbie's the boy! Herbie's the feller! Herbie's the kiddie!"

Alone in the centre of the ill-lit room he cast a long strange shadow. His long black hair had fallen down over his eyes. He looked grotesque and slightly demented.

All the gipsies were watching Wisdom now. But Wisdom said nothing. He looked smaller than Wisdom generally looked; he was bent forward from the hips and he didn't tower over his tribe any longer. And he said not a word.



"You see, sir," Wisdom said to John, twiddling his cap. "'Tis not for me, but for my people. They looks to I, to see as they're used fair"

Black Herbie, with his quick dramatic sense, realized that this was the moment to take his departure. He swaggered away. Betsy followed him, having first put out her tongue at Marta. The gipsies drew apart to make a way for him as he went down the long room.

Outside, he and his followers climbed into the high trap. Black Herbie waved his whip and walloped his pony; swaying and lurching, at a full canter, he drove off towards the Hope Farm.

Full tilt round the corner by Tommy's signpost came the high trap. Tommy and Marianne had to jump aside and press themselves into the hedge. The trap had no lights, of course. Black Herbie was standing up between the shafts, the pony was blowing, the springs were squeaking and, perched up on the trap, the gipsies shouted and sang. Herbie cracked his whip and raised an exultant cry to heaven. "Herbie's the kiddie! Herbie's the boy!"

Tommy, taking Marianne's hand to heave her back out of the hedge, murmured: "Your Uncle George, you know, is going to find it all very strange. Hereford's like a madhouse in the hop-picking. We catch it from the gipsies; we all go a bit crazy."

"I know," she laughed. "I can feel it coming on."

Tommy himself looked a trifle possessed. He had come out of the hop kiln ten minutes ago, spluttering and choking, his eyes as red as those of that wicked little ferret which the gipsy boys played with. The sulphur fumes gave him a sort of hay fever; so Marianne had suggested a walk to the bottom of the lane, and he'd been sneezing his head off all the way. He always took charge of the drying of the hops; he couldn't leave it to his doddery old foreman, who was apt to nod off at the critical moment.

The hoofbeats tattooed cloppity-cloppity down the lane; Black Herbie let out another howl.

"Why does he always have to go so fast?" Tommy said.

"The devil on his tail!" Marianne abruptly switched his mind back to business. "How do we carry on until the hops are in? Can we just scrape through and manage to pay the pickers?"

He had thought about that. The bank manager would probably let his overdraft run up a bit higher, knowing that he had the hop money to come. But the pickers' wages would tot up to more than two hundred a week; nearly £1,000 before the hops were finished.

"I may have to sell that bunch of young cattle," he said; and one of his foolish, optimistic sums began to take shape in his mind: seventeen beasts at £40 equals £680. That was what he had given for them, but perhaps they would have improved, grazing the good pasture in the river meadows—and somebody in the pub had said the trade was better last week. Say, then, seventeen beasts at £45 equals £795. (When he did these sums in his head he generally got the answers wrong; and they were always wrong on the hopeful, never the pessimistic side.)

He began to feel quite cheerful. Call it £800. That would pay the hop-pickers for the whole month; very nearly.

He suddenly remembered that bad fence against John Sollars's land. He must put it right tomorrow. He didn't know whether it was thinking of the cattle that had reminded him of this, or the sound of footsteps coming down the lane; for even in the dark you could recognize a Sollars by his stride. You could sense the arrogance in it.

A tall figure loomed up, Tim Sollars. The firm footsteps hesitated, and Tommy called out: "Hallo, Tim."

"Oh, it's you. Hallo, sir." Tim paused, then came up to them out of the dark.

"Marianne—had you heard she was home?" said Tommy.

"Oh yes, I had. Hallo, Marianne."

"Hallo," she said, and laughed, because she was remembering the last time she had seen him, four years ago, just before she had left the district. They had been going about together for some weeks—a casual boy-and-girl affair—when Tim, emboldened by her friendliness, had tried some ardent love-making. All he had got for his pains was a swift and surprising clout which had taken him completely out of his stride.

BUT if she had put him in his place then, he seemed very much at ease now, for he had settled himself in a typically Sollars attitude, hands in pockets, legs wide apart, and she felt that he was regarding her with a kind of amused curiosity.

At last he said to Tommy: "How are your hops, sir?"

"They're very good," said Tommy. "And yours?"

"They pick easy," said Tim; and Marianne guessed that he already knew Tommy was paying more than the rate they had agreed. She was poised and ready, if he said anything, to ask him who the hell the Sollarses thought they were, to give everybody orders.

Tim did know. He'd been in the Royal Victoria and witnessed the scene there. But he didn't mention the rate for the picking. He said casually: "And it's just the right weather for the job."

A white moth floated by. An owl hooted. Again Marianne felt that Tim was laughing at her and, for the sake of something to say, she said: "There's your old barn-owl, Father."

"Tawny," said Tim. "Tawnies hoot, barn-owls screech."

His correction made her angrier than ever. She

Continued on page 19

Robert McVity, an official at Grasmere since he was a schoolboy, watches for sharp practice among the competitors

At Grasmere they fight, run and jump for money. The stakes are big—and that may mean broken limbs and bloodshed for the . . .

Toughest men in sport

by ALAN PRICE

As secretary of the Grasmere Sports, Robert McVity was watching the lower slopes of mist-enshrouded Butter Crag. About ten minutes before, more than thirty competitors had sprinted out of the arena to run the senior guides' race, one of the most gruelling foot-races in the world.

The competitors had climbed two fences, swarmed over a ten-foot wall, splashed through two mountain streams and scrambled up one-in-three slopes bristling with rocks and bracken. At the peak of the Crag, 966 feet above the arena, they had handed in their entrance tickets, inscribed with their names, as proof that they had been to the top. Now they were leaping and crashing their way down.

Suddenly, McVity saw a figure appear from the mist. With a fine burst of speed, the runner crossed the finishing-line hundreds of yards ahead of his nearest rival. Before handing him the prize, the judges waited for the steward to come down from the peak with the entrance tickets. "I was suspicious," says McVity. "The 'winner' looked much too fresh."

The steward certainly had the man's ticket. But he insisted that it had been handed in by a man wearing a different coloured shirt. The alleged winner had never appeared at the peak. "The two accomplices came from the same village," says McVity. "The 'winner' had hidden half-way down the Crag and had started back when the other man had signalled that the runners were approaching."

An affable, easy-going accountant and insurance-broker who has been officiating at Grasmere since he sold programmes as a schoolboy, McVity quickly changed the system of checking. Instead of handing in entrance tickets, runners reaching the top of the Crag now pick up metal washers marked with a code which changes each year. "That makes it almost impossible to fiddle," he says.

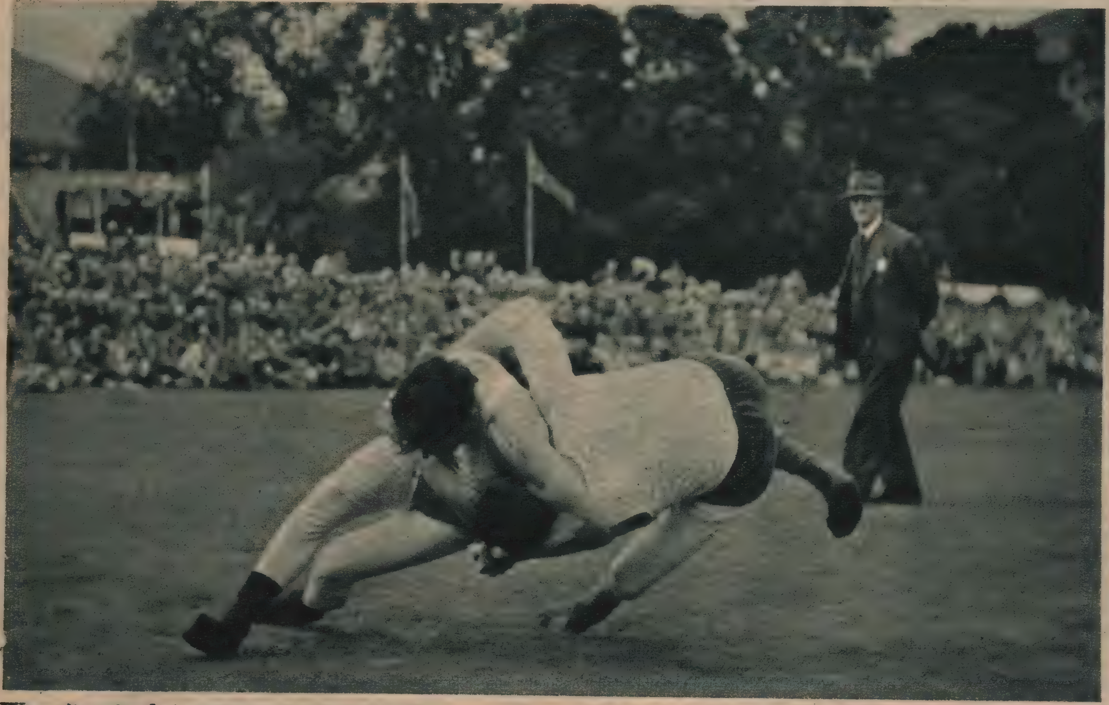
Though trivial in itself, the change was revolutionary by Grasmere standards. The premier meeting of a style of sports peculiar to north-west England, it has changed little since records of its meetings were first kept, two years after the death of Wordsworth. In spite of an excellent loudspeaker system, a bellman in a white coat and straw hat still calls competitors from their tents with a bell which is reputed to be more than a hundred years old.

Every year more than 10,000 people pay three shillings to enter the hill-surrounded ampitheatre. Many of them are local farmers. Others are tourists and trippers from industrial Lancashire, Yorkshire and southern Scotland. Besides the guides' races, they see athletics, hound-trailing and Cumberland and Westmorland style wrestling. Except for the boys' races, all the events are professional, with prizes worth £1,000 at stake. More than thirty bookmakers take bets on the results.

The Grasmere Sports meeting, McVity claims, is the toughest in the world. In the 1950 guides' race, a wiry Caldbeck shepherd called Bill Teasdale, who has since won the race five years out of six, was running second. Just in front of a stone wall the leading man fell down. Teasdale swerved, cannoned into the wall and sprawled full-length. His rival got up and trampled over him in his spiked boots. Teasdale scrambled to his feet, overtook the other man and arrived at the finishing-line with a four hundred yards lead—and a bleeding pattern of spike marks on his leg.

Another competitor was not so lucky. To hoist himself up a ten-foot wall, he grabbed a heavy stone on top. When he was almost at the top himself, the stone came away. He fell full-length backwards and struck his head on a rocky outcrop. Ambulance men who patrol the route rushed to the spot. "He was unconscious," says McVity. "He spent three weeks in hospital with severe concussion."

The wrestling can also be dangerous. Peter



Wrestling is the most ancient of the Grasmere Sports. Competitors dress in the traditional costume of vest and full-length pants. Woollen socks of red, green, blue or black match their velvet briefs

For the puppy trail event the trail is laid by two men, who start from the fells and work back to the arena in opposing semi-circles, dragging rags soaked in aniseed oil, paraffin and engine oil

Guides' races were first held for men who led visitors over the fells. Below: Bill Teasdale was badly "spiked" by a runner's boots when he fell during a guides' race —but he went on to win easily

Kelly, the husky, balding wrestling manager, explains: "A novice will often hold on when he is thrown and drag his heavier opponent on top of him. Others fail to break their falls and are stunned. Occasionally, a man may break his leg."

Experts differ as to whether the Cumberland and Westmorland style of wrestling was introduced two thousand years ago by the Romans or one thousand years ago by the Norsemen.

After shaking hands, each man rests his chin on his opponent's right shoulder and tries to clasp his hands behind his opponent's back. When both contestants have secured a hold, the struggle starts. Traditional throws and holds have names such as hipe, lap-hank and full-buttock. The first man to break his hold or touch the ground with any part of his body is the loser.

"The match usually lasts between one and two minutes when they have got their holds," says Peter Kelly. "But getting them may take fifteen minutes—or even longer. Once, a match had to be abandoned for the day because neither man could get a hold."

In spite of the high degree of skill possible, some bouts are inevitably won by sheer brawn. Two years ago, in the under-sixteen class, an extremely clever boy wrestler reached the final. Unfortunately he weighed less than five stones and was matched against an opponent weighing almost twice as much. "He lost purely because his opponent was heavier," says Kelly. "It was decided to give him a special prize."

After the guides' races and the wrestling, the most popular events are the hound and puppy trails. Betting is heavy. Stakes of three figures are occasionally laid. The hounds, originally bred from foxhounds of famous fell packs, are thought by some people to have had a touch of pointer added to improve their scent and speed. They have their own stud-books and are kept exclusively for trailing. Outrageously pampered, they are walked at least six miles a day and are fed on such delicacies as sherry, eggs and venison. An owner was recently reported to have been offered £750 for a promising puppy.

The hound and puppy trails are always keenly contested. In 1953 a puppy called Misadventure was announced as the winner of the puppy trail. John Crowther, the owner of a puppy called Loyalty, which had come in second, immediately put in an objection—and backed it with the statutory fee of £1—on the grounds that Misadventure had not completed the course. The judges overruled his objection. Crowther then produced £5 for an appeal to the executive committee of the Hound Trail Association.

"They sustained his objection," says McVity. "A scout on the route told them that Misadventure had started by wandering aimlessly about the fells. Then it heard baying and ran to join the other hounds. By a coincidence, it struck the scent in front of them and came in first."

Crowther won £6 in cash and a trophy. The biggest prize in the Sports goes to the winner of the 100 yards sprint. He gets £70 in cash. "Amateurs often come to me and ask if they can run under an assumed name so as not to compromise themselves with the Amateur Athletic Association," says Bill Twentyman, the shrewd, amiable handicapper. "We don't mind—so long as they put their cards on the table."

Grasmere draws its runners from all over northern England and southern Scotland. All races except the guides' races are handicaps. "Handicapping is the only way to attract competitors," says Twentyman. "Otherwise, only the best would bother to turn up."

Occasionally the money at stake causes bad feeling. One year, the judges were unable to pick out the first two in the first 100 yards semi-final, so they sent the first three to the final. To be fair, they then decided to let the first three of the second semi-final enter the final. When the final was run, all six runners finished within inches of each other. "There were four prizes," says Twentyman. "But the man who was judged fifth said that he was first past the post, a claim which was supported by onlookers. He was furious. He called the judges all sorts of names and even threatened them. Finally, they offered him a pound. He saw that it was that or nothing, and took it."

Records of the Grasmere Sports were first kept in 1852, and since 1865 the Sports have been held every year except during the two world wars. They reached their highest popularity before the last war, when between 16,000 and 17,000 spectators paid to watch them each year. Often, Lord Lonsdale drove down from his nearby country seat with a procession of bright yellow cars. His guests included the Prince of Hanover and the Princess Royal.

Nowadays the sports are run by a private limited company which never declares a dividend. Last year it lost about £300. As this was almost exactly equal to the entertainment tax paid, McVity hopes that this year they will at least break even. He himself draws £70 a year for his work as secretary.

Although new ideas come slowly to Grasmere Sports, McVity did institute one change. When the leading hound entered the arena at the end of the hound trail, it had been the tradition for the band to strike up "D'ye ken John Peel?" In 1954, a hound called Dark Night came down from the fells with a twenty-yard lead. But when it entered the arena the noise of the band stopped it dead. Before it could recover its senses, another hound slipped through and won first prize. "Since then," says McVity, "the band hasn't struck up until the first six hounds are actually in the arena. That's quite a big change for Grasmere."

THE END

A girl called Susie

by THURMAN WARRINER

Afraid of her? No, it was just that he had never been much good, that's all. . . . Funny though—she didn't seem to mind

Nature gave Coombe Regis a superb position in a deep valley opening majestically to the sea. Time has bequeathed an ancient church, a castle keep. The twentieth century had added a few teashops, a cocktail bar to the Olde Shippe Hotel and a cinema.

Nothing more. Snob appeal has handed down the tradition from one generation to another that Coombe Regis is so relaxing, so restful, so quite unspoiled.

But Slim Loman has defiled the former dignity of Shore Street with Slim's Fun Parlour.

Slim never heard of Coombe Regis till last year. At that time he was working for a garage in North London—the best job he'd had since running barefoot in his native slum. He had been delivering a car. Sauntering up Shore Street with the trade-plates under his arm, he took his first look at the little town, modest product of time and Nature, and wondered how people *lived* there. He looked at it in the same way he would look at the moon through a beach telescope.

"Lumme!" he muttered to himself, "what do they *do*? Cripes, wonder what it's like on Christmas Eve?"

But though he didn't realize it at the time, Coombe Regis was working its subtle magic with him. Some months later he delivered another car to Sandmouth, a few miles away, took a bus to Coombe Regis, and sat on the harbour side, thinking a lot of muddled thoughts. There was a one-storey wooden structure to let, half-way up Shore Street. Should be a living in it. But you'd got to have a good line.

Soon afterwards he lost his job. He'd never kept one long. He leaned against a Soho wall one day, working things out.

Slim had been in fifty rackets in his time, and hadn't made sixpence out of any. Oddly, he'd never been *inside*. He managed to skip, usually, just before the police came round the corner. That wasn't lack of guts. But Slim Loman spent half his time hating himself. He wasn't any better than the rest, but somewhere inside him he felt he ought to be.

"Point is," he said to the Balham Basher, who was staring mournfully across the same bombed site, "can you make it *pay*?"

"Twenny, fifty, forty parnd a week," said the Basher.

"Then why aren't you doing it, eh?"

"Me? I ain't got the build. Ain't got the facial structure. Me, I frighten the kids. Got to catch 'em as they comes togevver rarnd the corner, see? 'Appy farver, five kids sucking lollies, and the missus tagging on be'ind. Give 'em a ticket and they fall for it every time."

"I never took photos," Slim said.

"So what? All you've got to do is point and press. They supplies all the stuff. Commission basis. You'd do well. Got that sort of face. I ain't. What did you leave Hookers' for, anyway? Any fool can handle a spray-gun, can't they?"

"I hops through the back window," said Slim, "just as they scraped off the blue paint and found maroon underneath. I didn't know what Hooker was up to."

Next day he hitch-hiked to Sandmouth, but found that every pitch was taken and every operator had all the men he wanted, what with students wanting to pick up a bit of cash. So he walked along the ten miles of lush coast and came over West Hill for the third time into Coombe Regis.

He sat on the harbour wall again, then walked up Shore Street. The old shack was still empty. It said on the window: THESE VALUABLE BUSINESS PREMISES TO LET.

Slim scratched his head. Place needed livening up a bit. No amusement park, no nothing. For inspiration he caught a bus back to Sandmouth. In half a mile of blatant promenade he counted nine amusement arcades . . . and in Coombe Regis there wasn't one. Now that was an idea.

He strolled into one of them, invested a few coppers and manipulated various buttons and levers. He played two tunes on the juke-box. The proprietor, a seedy, beady-eyed individual, watched him speculatively.

"These things cost a lot?" Slim asked.

"Cost a fortune," the proprietor said, and Slim nodded unhappily. He hadn't a fortune. Just a few pounds in the Post Office.

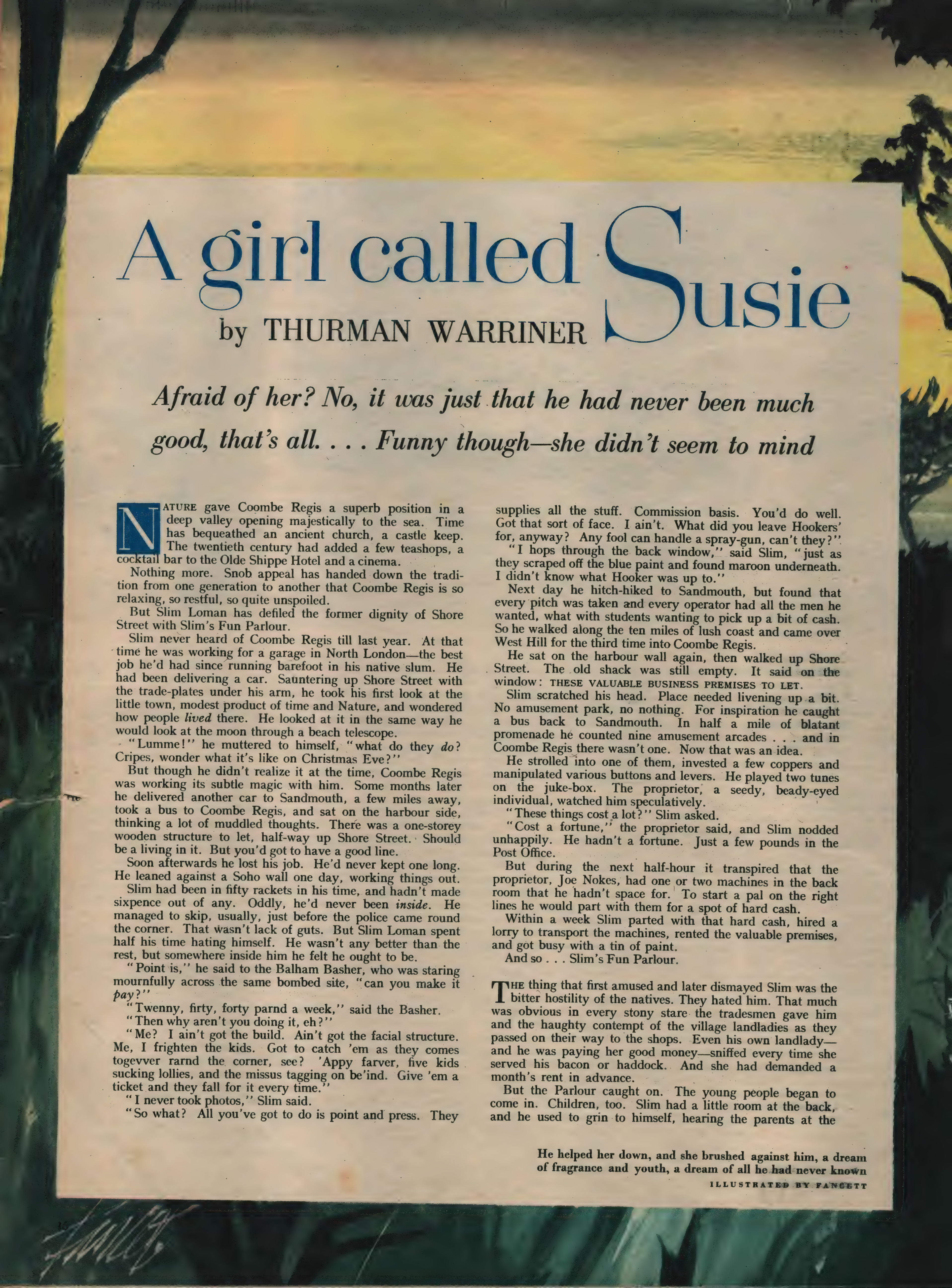
But during the next half-hour it transpired that the proprietor, Joe Nokes, had one or two machines in the back room that he hadn't space for. To start a pal on the right lines he would part with them for a spot of hard cash.

Within a week Slim parted with that hard cash, hired a lorry to transport the machines, rented the valuable premises, and got busy with a tin of paint.

And so . . . Slim's Fun Parlour.

The thing that first amused and later dismayed Slim was the bitter hostility of the natives. They hated him. That much was obvious in every stony stare the tradesmen gave him and the haughty contempt of the village landladies as they passed on their way to the shops. Even his own landlady—and he was paying her good money—sniffed every time she served his bacon or haddock. And she had demanded a month's rent in advance.

But the Parlour caught on. The young people began to come in. Children, too. Slim had a little room at the back, and he used to grin to himself, hearing the parents at the



He helped her down, and she brushed against him, a dream of fragrance and youth, a dream of all he had never known

ILLUSTRATED BY FAWCETT

door. *You can't waste your money like that. I say NO, Tony.* Or Terence, or Paul. But they kept coming just the same.

There were three brothers who came in three or four times every day and always made a beeline for GOAL!, which stood in the middle of the uneven wooden floor. It was a long, glass-topped case with a goal at both ends, each protected by a man with a hinged leg. You got seven balls for a penny, and the trick was to keep the ball out of your own goal and kick it down the table into the other fellow's. The slope was cunningly arranged so that all seven balls were quickly disposed of by the force of gravity, if not otherwise.

The three brothers were called Peter, Marcus, and Gilbert. When they got to know him, they called him Slim. They always had a girl with them, and for a time Slim thought she must be their elder sister, till he noticed they called her Miss Sherwood.

Slim might never have known her first name, but one day a big car stopped at the door while the boys were playing with the machines, and a prosperous-looking man and woman got out. They stood at the door watching, then the man said: "So that's where the money goes, Susie," and the girl laughed.

"They love it," she said.

Slim liked Peter the best. He was a thin, grave-faced ten-year-old, always very preoccupied as he worked the lever, and he didn't shout with glee when he whanged the ball into Gilbert's goal, but smiled quietly and sometimes gave Slim a knowing, friendly look.

Slim was making a living, just. But it was hard going, and the hostility of Coombe Regis got on his nerves. He remembered little East End joints where an urchin would throw twopence or threepence away on a machine after choosing a long, long time, then stare wistfully, and go away.

But these kids didn't bother. When the seven balls had gone, they slammed in another penny, that was all. Oh, it was grand to be rich, have a pretty girl to take care of you, have Mummy and Daddy and a big car just in the background.

OUT of Slim's resentment was born an idea. . . . That night he performed a minor operation on GOAL! It was a Saturday night, and there would be a fresh crop of customers on Monday, so they'd never know. He took out two of those little steel balls. Five a penny now! Cost-of-living index is rising. All the papers say so.

He was lurking in the back office on Monday morning when a shrill young voice called from the Parlour: "Slim, they're stuck."

He came out, lighting a cigarette. To his surprise he saw the same three boys bending over GOAL!, shaking it, tapping it, even gently thumping it underneath.

It was an embarrassing moment for Slim. He added his own shakes, taps and thumps as convincingly as possible in view of the fact that the missing steel balls were at that moment in his pocket.

"Too bad," he said vaguely. "You never know with these things." He glanced past the boys at Miss Sherwood, who was smiling at their combined antics. "Never expected seeing you this morning. Thought you'd have gone home, miss."

"We're here for a month. And then we come again in October."

It was the first time she had ever spoken to Slim directly. His confusion was so great that he almost pulled out the missing balls with his handkerchief.

"Well," he said, "what are we going to do about it?"

"It doesn't matter, actually," Peter said with his frank smile. "If they're stuck, they're stuck. It's just going to cost more, that's all."

And it did cost more. Slim calculated that his little rearrangement of the laws of chance brought an extra three and sevenpence into his pocket that day.

But it wasn't clear profit. He paid for it in another way. That evening, he noticed a policeman eyeing Slim's Fun Parlour from across the road. It was the first time he had felt uneasy under a policeman's gaze since that unfortunate episode in Hooker's garage, and he didn't like it.

Also, he kept remembering Susie Sherwood. Slim had never had a girl, not a real girl like Susie. He stared through the back window of his little office at the woods and fields, and thought that he'd hate her to know what he'd done.

Still, it was a good business move. By the end of the week, he had almost forgotten that GOAL! originally operated on seven balls.

He was leaning against the harbour-rail on Sunday evening when he saw her again. Sunday was a dead loss to Slim. They wouldn't let him open, and he'd nothing to do; nothing but stare at the boats and the sea. It was at times like that when those vague stirrings inside Slim were worst.

She came across the road and leaned against the rails, too. "Hallo, Slim," she said.

He gave her a jaunty nod. "Never expected seeing you around. Nice and cool now, isn't it?"

She didn't say whether it was or not. After a while he asked: "Where are the boys tonight?"

"Marcus and Gil are in bed. Peter's a bit older, so he doesn't go so early, but Mrs. Curtall takes care of him sometimes so that I can get out."

"You their nurse or something?"

"I'm supposed to be Mrs. Curtall's secretary-companion—which includes doing just about everything Mrs. Curtall doesn't want to do herself."

Slim, glancing at her sideways, thought he had never seen anyone so pretty and fresh. She stood for a while beside him, her slender, tanned arms on the rail, then she said she would be seeing him again some time. She was going up over West Hill, because she loved being there in the evening and watching darkness fall over the town.

Slim swallowed hard. "Funny," he said. "I was just going that way, too. Would you mind if I . . . sort of came along?"

She gave him a quick glance, and fell into step beside him. It was steep going when they left the road, and once she held on to his arm for a moment. When they came to the high, tree-covered bluff, she was panting and her eyes were bright.

They sat down on the short grass. For a while they didn't speak. Then she said: "It's perfect here, isn't it?"

"It's a nice place all right. D'you know, I've never been up here before."

"You haven't? When you *live* here?"

"Just for the season, that's all. Matter of business with me. Soon as everybody's gone, it'll not be long before I've gone, too."

His eyes were on Coombe Regis, serene in the valley below, but all the time he was seeing her. She told him, in her soft voice, that the Curtalls had been good to her. Mr. Curtall owned a chain of grocery stores and they were very rich. She had always wanted to be a nurse, or an air hostess or something like that, but she adored children and was very happy with the Curtalls.

"You're a Londoner, aren't you?" she asked.

He nodded. "Never thought I'd find myself in a little dump like this."

It was getting darker. "We'd better go," Susie said.

"Sure . . . sure," he muttered.

They stood a moment under the trees, then turned away. On that first awkward corner he helped her down, and she brushed against him, a dream of fragrance and youth, a dream of all the things he had never known. . . .

He had never kissed a girl before. Not like that. He kissed her again and again, then gently moved his fingertips over her face and neck, and leaned back against a tree, shaking his head.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Gosh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to. . . . Susie, you'll not stop bringing the kids, will you?"

She smiled up at him. "Slim, what are you afraid of?"

"Me? I don't know. . . . I'm not afraid. But I've never been any good, see? Slim's Fun Parlour! Big business to me, that. First thing I've ever had. But it's . . . sort of cheap, isn't it? That's what you're thinking."

"Slim's not your real name, is it? Why do they call you that?"

"Slim? Well, I never carried a lot of weight. They called me that at school, and I guess it stuck. I suppose you're thinking that's cheap, too."

"What's your real name?"

He hesitated, then said: "It's Andy. Andy Loman."

"Andrew Loman." She smiled again. "That sounds good enough to be anybody's name. Come on, Andy: Let's go now."

He came up again next evening, trying to recapture the magic. But *she* wasn't there. He realized that all the beauty in the world means nothing, unless someone is there.

On Wednesday Susie and the boys didn't come at all. And next day Peter wasn't with them.

Susie was pale and worried. "He's in the Cottage Hospital," she told Slim. "He *would* climb over the rocks at low tide, and yesterday morning he slipped and broke his leg."

"No!" said Slim, greatly concerned.

"It's nothing terribly serious—one of those greenstick fractures. But Mr. Curtall's dreadfully worried, because his brother once broke a leg and it wasn't set properly and it's been short ever since."

Slim thought about that in the darkness, trying to sleep. He liked Peter. If ever he had a kid—now fancy him getting ideas like that—he'd want him to be like Peter. Imagine Peter, always so full of life, hopping about the rest of his days on a short leg.

Susie called with Marcus and Gilbert every day. She said they went to the hospital in the evenings, and Peter was doing fine. His leg was in plaster, and next week he'd be coming out and should be able to hobble about.

"So you'll be seeing him again before we leave, Andy," she said.

"Wonder if I could get in Sunday afternoon. Think he'd like to see me?"

"Oh, that's wonderful of you, Andy. I'm certain he would."

Slim spent the rest of the day in deep thought. He couldn't live with that conscience of his. Peter must have had quite a hundred tries on GOAL! since those two balls got stuck, so roughly a third of his tries had been a swizzle. Slim calculated that he owed Peter something like two and ninepence.

That evening he went across the road to the toy shop on the corner. There was a diving submarine at three shillings and a rubber throwing-knife at half a crown. But Slim had a debt to pay, and two and nine it had to be. He finally settled for a plastic Space Cannon.

AT two o'clock on Sunday afternoon Slim went to the hospital with the Space Cannon under his arm. He walked past the narrow beds till he saw Peter's thin, eager face, then hesitated. Mr. and Mrs. Curtall were there.

"Come and join the family group," Mr. Curtall said heartily. "Very nice of you to come, my boy."

"Glad you don't mind, sir. How's tricks, Peter? Think you could kill any of the doctors with this thing?"

He produced the Space Cannon, and Peter turned it over with admiration. "It's wizard. Thanks, Slim."

Now the debt was paid, Slim felt a great glow of satisfaction. He could look Peter in the face again. When they left, Mr. Curtall offered him a lift into town, but Slim said he'd rather walk.

"Just as you please," Mr. Curtall said. "It's a pleasure to find kindness like this. We like Coombe Regis, but the people are a little . . . stand-offish, don't you think?"

"With you?" Slim asked. "When you butter their bread, so to speak? Now you can understand it with me. I'm a foreigner. Lowering the tone of the place, that's me."

"Nonsense!" Mr. Curtall said. "Don't run down your own job, Mr. Loman."

"Job? Well, not much of a job, maybe." Slim twirled his shoe-toe in the gravel of the hospital drive. "Just a living. Not much to be proud of, running a few slot-machines."

"What of it? I started by bottling pickles in old jam-jars, my boy, and now I own twenty-three retail stores, besides being twice mayor of my native town. I confidently look forward to seeing you the proud owner of amusement parks all over the country. Ah, here's Susie with the boys."

The Curtalls departed in their car, taking the boys while Slim and Susie walked. When they got to Shore Street Slim coughed nervously and said it looked like being a nice night.

"I suppose you're not walking over West Hill way again after tea?" he asked hopefully.

"I'd like to," she said, "if you would."

"I promise I'll not try . . . well, I mean it won't happen again."

She nodded. "I'll be passing the harbour about seven."

"And I'll be leaning over the same old rail."

"But we'll not be going over West Hill next Sunday," she said. "Peter's coming out on Wednesday and we'll be going home the day after."

"Sorry about that," Slim said. "It won't seem like the same old place. . . ."

It was Wednesday night when it happened. Slim was looking anxiously up Shore Street for some sign of Susie, then happened to glance in the opposite direction and saw a beefy sergeant and a thin-nosed contable approaching.

He went into the little room. The policemen stopped outside. They talked and nodded, then drifted down the street again. Slim came back to the door and saw that Susie was coming, too.

Slim's conscience was making his

The Queen's portrait painter

EDWARD HALLIDAY has painted the Queen more often than any other artist. In a revealing article Jerome Hood writes about Halliday's colourful career and his most celebrated sitter . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

heart thump. There might be rules, laid down by the Board of Trade, about the number of balls made available by the insertion of any one penny in an automatic machine.

As if they had made up their minds about something, the policemen were returning to the attack. Slim had a split mind for the next fifteen seconds. Susie was coming down the street; the sergeant and his man were coming up. He was afraid they would meet at the door, and that is what happened. Susie, with a curious, puzzled frown, crossed the street and pretended not to see what was going on.

The sergeant entered heavily and looked at Slim with hungry eyes. "You're Mr. Andrew Loman?"

Slim nodded. "That's me."

"This your place?"

"All of it." He leaned back against the wall, feeling his hands sweating behind his back, following them with his eyes. The sergeant put a penny into TOTE and manipulated it with ham-like hands. "You won't get any profit out of that," Slim said. "For amusement only."

The sergeant came to the middle of the floor and started at GOAL! Slim lit a cigarette and threw it away. He knew Susie was watching. He looked across the road and lifted his hand in a half-salute.

"What's all this about?" he asked. "Everything's above board, isn't it? What's wrong with a feller trying to make an honest living, eh?"

"Nothing," the sergeant said, "providing it *is* honest." He turned to the constable. "Seems as if this is it."

The constable nodded. "It's it all right."

"Looks as if you're in for a bit of trouble, Mr. Loman," the sergeant said.

"What, me?"

"When did you buy these machines?"

"Buy them? Let's see. End of May."

"Had a bit of wear and tear, haven't they?"

"Second-hand," Slim said tersely.

"Third, more likely. Now, you bought them from a Mr. Nokes——"

"That's right, Joe Nokes. Some stuff he'd no use for."

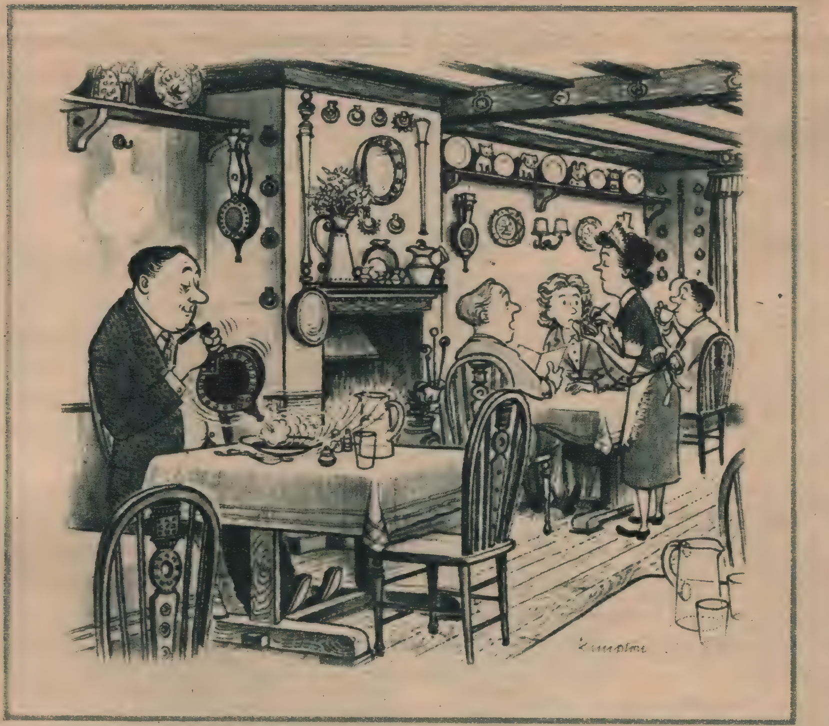
"Did he tell you he'd bought these machines from one Jacob Goldman, proprietor of the Happydays Amusement Arcade at Clacton, paid the sum of ten pounds on account, and has paid nothing of the balance since?"

"Cripes!" said Slim.

"And are you aware that Mr. Joe Nokes has now absconded, leaving many such debts and one or two more serious matters to be cleared up?"

Slim stared at the sergeant. Relief begat rising anger. "So what's that to do with me? Why pick on me? I paid Joe Nokes. I can prove I did. Just because I wasn't born in this little one-street dump two hundred years ago and they look down their long noses at a bit of fun and games, they'd like to kick me out of town. Why pick on me? That's the police all over."

The constable had invested a



penny on GOAL! and was kicking the balls around with some skill. "Nobody's picking on you, Mr. Loman," the sergeant said. "Hey, you, be your ruddy age and leave that machine alone. Now if you've got receipts to show——"

"You bet I have."

"Then that lets you out. But I'm afraid this junk still belongs to Jacob Goldman."

"So that shuts me up as well as lets me out. What about my living?"

The sergeant rubbed his chin. "Nothing to do with me, strictly speaking. But if I was in your shoes, Mr. Loman, I'd get in touch with Mr. Goldman and tell him we're satisfied that you took possession of the machines in good faith, and come to some arrangement with him to continue using same pending a settlement. Though that's none of my business. Now, can I see those receipts?"

When they had gone, Slim stood drumming his hands on the glass panel of GOAL! and staring into vacancy. Susie was coming across the street. She said: "Hallo, Andrew."

He nodded.

"Was that trouble?"

"Not for me. For the feller who sold me these machines. They didn't belong to him."

"Oh, that's a relief! You looked so *afraid*, Andrew. As if you'd done something wrong. I wanted to come over and help you, but I thought you wouldn't like it."

He looked up, slowly, meeting her eyes. "You mean . . . you'd have helped me even if I'd done something wrong?"

"Don't you know I would?"

Slim shook his head in a bewildered way. That seemed such a wonderful, tremendous thing. He knew that something was happening to him, and he didn't quite know what it was. He blundered through the back-room door and held it open.

He said: "You'd better come in. You'd better sit down, Susie. I've got something to tell you."

She looked wonderful in that thin summer dress. Her eyes were round and wondering. He began to tell her, in a hard, jerky voice.

When he had finished he went to the window and gazed out at the sunlit hillside. He felt it didn't belong to him any more. He said over his shoulder: "So that's that. I didn't take that hunk of plastic rubbish to the hospital because I'm Big Hearted Slim. Just because I was ashamed of being so damn mean."

HOLIDAYS—1

People who never do any work never have any holidays.

Lord Samuel

In the silence he could hear the birds singing, the sharp cry of gulls. "Why don't you *say* something?" he asked. When she didn't, he went on in a steadier voice: "But I'm not really mean, Susie. I didn't think of it that way. It was just being smart."

"I know you're not mean, Andy."

"Don't know why I told you. I tried not. I worked out that I'd got to keep my nasty little self to myself and not bother anybody. But somehow I had to tell you."

He looked at her angrily. "So now you can get out. I don't want any stuff about starting a new life and I don't want anybody feeling sorry for me, see?"

"You really want me to go?"

He nodded.

"Why?" When he didn't answer, she put her hand on his arm and said again: "Why, Andy?"

"Because it—it hurts to be with you," he said.

She got up and went to the door. "All right, if that's the way you feel. I'll call again later."

"I don't want to see you any more."

"You don't mean that, Andy. We'll be back in October, anyway."

"I'll not be here then," he said. "You go back to the kids and leave me alone."

When she had gone he started to unscrew the glass panel of GOAL! . . .

He knew they would be starting early. But it was after opening time, long after, and he hadn't seen the big car roll up Shore Street. He obstinately kept the door shut. He was reading the morning paper, upside down, when the knocking and battering began.

"Closed!" he shouted, but the knocking went on. Peter and Marcus and Gilbert were crowding the pavement, with the Curtalls's car behind them.

He opened the door and they rushed in, all chattering at once.

"Look!" Peter said. "I can nearly walk now."

He hobbled across the floor with the space cannon levelled. "You'd better go," Slim said. "Your old man's waiting."

"He said we could come and say goodbye," Marcus said. "And we want one last go."

They clustered round the machine. Peter's face wore its usual expression of intense concentration. But suddenly he shouted with delight: "Slim, it's working properly. They've come unstuck."

"You never know with these things," Slim said. He hustled them outside and stood blinking in the sunshine. "Into the car with you," he said, looking away from Susie.

"It's not long till October, Slim," Peter said. "We'll be seeing you then."

"Maybe," Slim said.

They pushed past Susie on the back seat and she shut the door. She wound down the window. "It's not long," she said, "till October."

His mouth twitched. "I'll be here."

When they had gone the street seemed empty, the day seemed empty. Just before dusk he locked up Slim's Fun Parlour and walked up the hill, and sat for a long time under the pines on the short, warm grass. Slim didn't know yet whether he would be here in October; whether he would ever dare show her what he would try to make of himself by then. But at least he could try.

THE END

September moon

Continued from page 13

saw now that nothing remained of the clumsy boy she had previously known. Tim was damnably assured.

The silence was broken by one of Tommy's fits of coughing. "That damned sulphur," he said.

"Yes, it gets right down into your wind." Tim moved off up the lane. "Good night, Marianne. Good night, sir." He took great leisurely strides.

Tommy put his arm in Marianne's and said: "Let's walk on a bit farther." She had her hackles up, Tommy knew, but he couldn't understand why. He thought it would be best not to refer to Tim.

"Yes, poor George," he said half to himself, "I don't know what he'll make of us, honestly—what with the drunks and the fights and the gipsies."

"*Can* he sell us up?" Marianne asked abruptly.

"Naturally; unless I can pay off the arrears. And that would take all the hop-picking money, and leave us nothing to carry on with."

"Look," said Marianne, stopping suddenly and pointing over the trees. The slenderest crescent moon leaned upon their topmost branches. "Let's turn our money, and wish."

Tommy put his hand in his pocket and felt the half-crown and the shilling which hadn't been enough to pay for drinks at the Royal Victoria.

"Now you whizzle round."

He turned round twice, and became extremely giddy. She took him by the shoulders and pushed him round again. "Now bow, and wish."

He wished like mad.

Marianne was lightly revolving. "Seven times for me, to make sure! I'm letting you off with three in case you get a cerebral thrombosis." She was in one of her suddenly excited moods. "It'll all come right," she said, dancing before the crescent. "I know it'll all come right. . . ."

Tim got downstairs next morning just as the cows were coming in for milking. There were two pairs of gumboots standing by the back door, so it looked as if his father had overslept. This was unprecedented in hop-picking time.

He went out to do his early morning chores. Then, as there was still no sign of his father, he hurried back to the house. His father was sitting in the chair by the fireplace. His mother was at the table. She glanced up.

"Oh, Tim, I'm afraid your father's not very well. It's a pain in his chest," she added. "And, of course, he won't have the doctor, in case he sends him to bed, in the hop picking."

Tim could see that, despite her care for John, she accepted and understood the overriding duty to the hops, because she was dedicated to them, too. In her family, as in John's, it was unthinkable that anybody should be laid up during the hop picking.

"I can manage everything today," he said reassuringly.

"Of course you can." His mother gave him a bright smile and got up to leave. Going by John Sollars's chair she let her hand rest lightly on his shoulder for a moment.

The door had no sooner shut on her than someone knocked on it. The little maid, Polly, came in. She said: "Wisdom Lee's at the back door, sir. I told him you wasn't well, but he wants to see you special."

"Show him in here," said John; and as Polly went out: "I wonder what the trouble is now."

Tim guessed it was because Wisdom now knew how much Black Herbie was getting for the picking and wanted the same rate for his own tribe. He said nothing, however.

Polly came back, showing in Wisdom. He looked unhappy, twiddling his cap in his hands, and Tim wasn't quite sure whether John had asked him into the room because he didn't feel like getting out of his chair, or simply to put Wisdom at a disadvantage; for no gipsy is happy under a roof.

Wisdom's natural dignity half-hid

his discomfiture. He said: " I'm sorry, Mister John, to hear as you're ailing."

Perhaps it was the word " ailing " that annoyed John Sollars. He said quite sharply: " You don't look so sprightly yourself. Well, what is it?"

Wisdom laid forth his grievance about the rate for the picking. It took him quite a long time. He had none of Black Herbie's fluency. He told John what Black Herbie had said in the pub and how the Welsh girls had confirmed it.

" I wouldn't have believed it else, Mister John."

Tim, as he listened uncomfortably, was conscious of Wisdom's integrity; and it rather shocked him when his father turned to him for confirmation.

" Is this true about Tomkins?"

" I heard the Welsh girls say he was paying one and four."

" You see, sir," Wisdom put in, " 'tis not for me, but for my people. They looks to I to see as they're used fair."

" You say I'm unfair?"

" I wasn't meaning that, sir. You couldn't have known, when you told me yesterday, as the rate wasn't the same everywhere."

" I didn't know," said John. " But as to what *I* pay, that is my business, and none of Mr. Tomkins's. My rate is one and two. Please tell your people."

" Yes," said Wisdom, wringing his cap as if it were a wet rag.

" That's all, then," said John.

Wisdom turned to go. Tim, feeling miserable and ashamed, went to open the door for him. Pausing beside it, Wisdom said: " Maybe, Mister John, they won't pick for one and two?"

" Take it or leave it, then."

Wisdom slowly went out. Tim walked to the back door with him. " I'm sorry about it," he said. He wanted to say more, but that would have been disloyal to his father.

Wisdom made things worse by looking at him devotedly. " We ain't never had a strike on this farm before," he said. " And I shan't like it, Master Tim, but it's my people." He limped off.

When Tim got back to the breakfast room, his father was just putting down the phone. He was angrier than Tim had ever seen him. Tim didn't know whether it was his illness or sheer rage that made him tremble so.

" Wisdom was telling the truth," he said.

" Did you speak to Tommy?"

There was a short pause.

" No," roared John. " I spoke to his daughter, though."

" And told her what you thought of Tommy?"

" She told me," said John, " what she thought of me." And, most surprisingly, he began to laugh.

Tim was amazed; his father was a man who didn't laugh readily, and who hardly ever laughed at himself.

He wanted to ask him what Marianne had said; but John stopped laughing and his face was all drawn again. " Damn," he said. " It's a hell of a pain, and it's in my vitals somewhere. I shan't "—he paused, and seemed to be trying to get his breath—" I shan't come down to the hops this morning."

" I'll manage," said Tim.

" You'll have a strike on your hands."

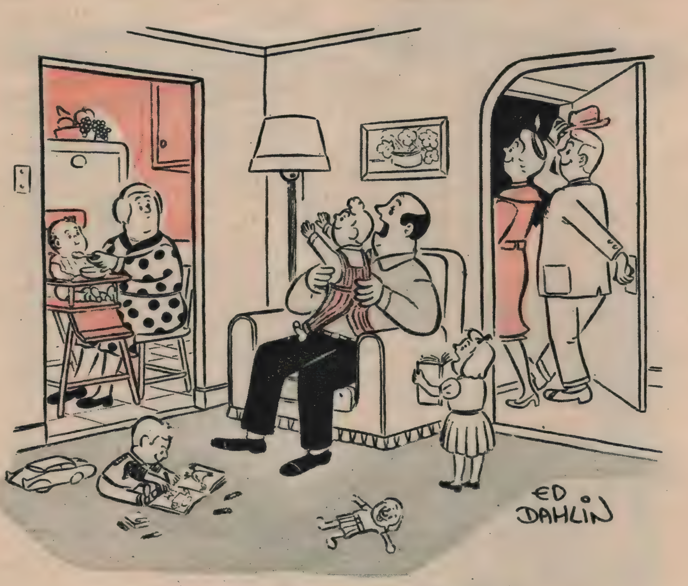
" I think so."

" Limit it to the gipsies if you can."

" What if the whole lot walked out on us?"

" Let 'em go. And when they've struck and you've nothing to do, go and have a look at that boundary fence by the river. Tomkins has got some scruffy cattle in there. Hell to pay if his screws get through and mix up with ours." He caught his breath as the pain stabbed again. " Now go and deal with those blasted diddy-kyes. Get to it, my lad. Get to it . . . !"

The gipsies sat in a long row, having spread themselves out to get the maximum shade from the hop-bines. It was an hour since Wisdom had told Tim, not defiantly but in sad resignation, that they were going to strike. They had stopped work, but they seemed unwilling to leave the hopyard.



"Isn't this the evening we said we wouldn't be doing anything?"

The Welsh were still picking, and some of the Black Country families, too, in a desultory way; but most of them stood in a group round a man in a dark suit called Mr. Comstock. Tim had never seen Mr. Comstock before. He was a new picker this year, one of a score that had come down from Birmingham, and he had emerged from his anonymous obscurity at the very first whisper of the word " strike."

Mr. Comstock had declared himself the spokesman of the workers from the Midlands. " It so 'appens as I've 'ad a lot of experience in 'andling disputes," he had said; and he had added that the first thing to do, in the case of a dispute, was to form a committee. He had bustled from bin to bin, canvassing.

Wisdom had refused to join. " 'Tis between we and Mister Sollars, and we don't want no Mitty," he said.

Mr. Comstock had gone next to the Welsh pickers; but they were perfectly happy, singing, laughing and flirting among themselves, and he had returned, disillusioned, to the factory folk from the Black Country whom he was now haranguing on the theme of exploitation by the bosses.

At last he managed to form his committee. At the head of it, very absurd in his shiny black suit which was so out of place in the hopyards, he was marching purposefully back towards the Welsh pickers in a deputation.

Tim decided that he'd better find out what was going on. When he got to the " house " where the Welsh were picking, Mr. Comstock was already in the full flood of his oratory.

" Take a look in the boss's gerridge: take a look at those motor-cars what was bought out of the pennies 'e can't afford to pay you."

One of the Welsh girls said: " Hot does he make me feel, with all his talking."

Tim let him be. His own tactics were to jolly along the people who were still working; so he picked for a time with the Welsh girls, and teased them and flirted with them. Then he decided to attack the enemy's stronghold and went across to the Black Country crowd who, in Mr. Comstock's absence, had mostly returned to their bins. He kept off the subject of the strike; but he picked with each family group in turn and got them talking about their domestic affairs. He'd known most of them since he was a boy.

All except about a dozen of the Dudley folk were picking now, and they had enough hops to keep the busheller busy. Tim tipped him off to be a bit generous when he dipped the basket into the bin; by crediting them with a whole bushel for a basket only three-quarters full he would be raising the real rate to more than one and fourpence. John Sollars might not approve; but at any rate the letter of the agreement would be kept.

Mr. Comstock was as busy as a bee. He moved in from the Welsh " house " to the gipsies, and apparently this time he came to some agreement with them. He came back triumphantly to Tim and presented him with an ultimatum.

" We give way a bit and you give way a bit," he said. " We'll pick for one and three."

Tim thought hard. He said at last: " I'm afraid I can't discuss it with you, Mr. Comstock: but I'll go and have another talk with Wisdom Lee."

Mr. Comstock snorted. " The wairkers are solid behind me," he said. " I warn you that if you turn this offer down——"

" Yes?"

" Out to a man," said Mr. Comstock. " *And* we picket the gates."

Tim firmly decided to have no further truck with him. If he gave way now, Mr. Comstock would be an intolerable nuisance for the rest of the month. He said: " There's nothing doing. You can go back to your bin and pick the hops; or you can get out."

HOLIDAYS—2

Packing before a holiday is a hundred times worth while, because it rubs in our felicity.

Bernard Darwin

Mr. Comstock's answer was to turn smartly and stalk away. Soon he was marching purposefully along the line of the bins. As he passed by each bin in turn the pickers stopped work and followed him. Like a kind of vacuum-cleaner he was sweeping the hopyard of its people. He left a long row of deserted bins behind him.

The Pied Piper, Tim thought. Then, suddenly, he cocked his head on one side as he heard an unmistakable sound in the lane. " Good Lord. That's the Bristol."

The Bristol came in through the gate, bouncing and bumping along the hop-row right up to Tim. John Sollars got out very slowly and held on to the open door as he stood beside it.

" So they're off," he said.

" Yes, Father."

" Get 'em back."

" Back?" repeated Tim in astonishment.

His father looked at him for quite a long time in silence.

" You did right, my boy. But now I want you to get them back for me." All the peremptoriness was gone. " You see, Bill Ferrers rang up. They've got botrytis on Temple Farm."

Botrytis was a fungus disease of the hops. It came sporadically. In some seasons the hops were quite free of it, in others only a few here and there were affected, but occasionally it would take hold, and spread far and wide, and run like wildfire through the hopyards from farm to farm.

" Remington's got it, too," John Sollars said. " We'll have to pick quickly." He leaned heavily against the car door and glanced at the backs of the pickers streaming out through the gate. " So in view of what that rat Tomkins has done we feel we've no choice but to pay up the rate. We've all agreed to pay one and four. . . ."

The battery was flat as usual; but Tommy said, as one who counts his blessings: " The great thing about living on top of a hill is that the battery doesn't really matter."

He had to meet George's train at Ledbury at half past two. So Marianne pushed, and Stan, the half-witted youth who worked for Tommy because nobody else would give him a job, pushed heartily, with grunts and giggles; they got the car out of the yard and into the lane, where it could run down the hill.

Tommy let in the clutch but there were only coughs from the engine. He got out and opened the bonnet and took off the cover of the magneto. He searched through his pockets for a nail-file, found one, and inserted it between the magneto points; he rubbed it briskly up and down. Finally he smiled happily at Marianne.

" I'm sure she'll go now. But will you and Stan run *very* fast behind her, please, and push like mad?"

They tore down the hill. One of Marianne's shoes came off. " Push, push!" cried Tommy. He let out the clutch and Marianne felt the exhaust chugging out hot smoke against her leg. The car made its usual pneumatic drill noises. " Hurray!" cried Tommy, waving his thanks to them.

Marianne limped back up the hill to pick up her shoe. Putting it on, she looked round to make sure the car was still going, and saw Tommy turn the corner by the signpost.

Across the road just beyond the corner were John Sollars's river-meadows; Tommy's adjacent pasture was hidden by the shoulder of the hill. She looked down upon the beautiful bend of the river, where it lay shining in the valley between the farms.

John Sollars's Herefords were standing hock-deep in a shallow place at the tail of his salmon-pool. It struck her that there were an awful lot of them; then with dismay she realized that there were some brownish ones among the red. She remembered about the fence Tommy had meant to have mended.

She called to Stan and pointed down at the meadow. He nodded vigorously: " Yes. Master's cattle."

Marianne was horrified. " We must get them back," she said to Stan. " Then we must mend the hole. You get some wire and some cutters and some stakes and something to hammer them in with." She heard the tractor in the yard; it was taking a load of hops to the kiln. " Then come down on the trailer and we'll mend the fence. Tell Robbie I said so."

Robbie drove the tractor. He was an elder brother of Stan's but he was much more intelligent; he had been sent to an approved school for stealing. It was just like Tommy to give the pair of them a job because he was " sorry for the kids."

Stan shambled off, and Marianne hurried down towards the meadows. She went by way of the hop yards, to collect some help, and found Black Herbie's two boys there.

They got to the meadow, where Black Herbie's caravans were parked by the river.

Now Marianne could see the hole in the hedge. It was wide enough to let a wagon pass. The two boys ran purposefully through the gap, pulling out two big sticks on their way, and she followed them. Once through

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the hedge, she was on the Sollars's land and she felt uncomfortable about being there.

She looked all round, but there was nobody in sight; she hoped she could get the cattle back before she was caught. The gipsy boys raced on and plunged into the shallows, noisily splashing to drive the cattle out. They were very happy now they had something to beat and, although Marianne yelled at them, they thumped the cattle impartially, John Sollars's as well as Tommy's, so that the whole lot stampeded round the field.

Marianne was thankful when she heard the tractor coming down the hill. But the gipsy boys, who could run faster than the cattle, had now got in front of them and were hitting their noses with the sticks. This caused a new stampede in the opposite direction.

THE whole herd came back straight at Marianne, swishing their tails. She saw a chance to head them into a corner and held her arms out wide, flapping at them. They took no notice until the very last moment, when they shied away and parted into two separate cavalcades, tearing by on each side of her.

Their hoofs made such a noise on the hard ground that she didn't hear the other hoofs thudding behind her. The great chestnut horse seemed to come from nowhere. Tim pulled it up from the gallop and shouted: "Can't you see she's in calf, you bloody little fool?" He stood up in the stirrups and yelled at the gipsy boys: "Stand still!"

To Marianne's astonishment they fetched up in mid-career. Tim said more quietly: "Drop those sticks," and they dropped them, first one, then the other, plop into the grass.

Then for the first time Marianne saw the cow. It had been running in front of the boys. Now it came to a stop with head thrust forward and forelegs wide apart. Its deep sides heaved. In panic Marianne wondered if it was about to drop its calf.

Tim jumped off his horse. He didn't even glance at Marianne when he held out the reins to her.

"Hold him, please."

He went towards the cow, planted himself Sollars-fashion beside it, and stared hard at the barrel sides. At last he shrugged his shoulders and came back to his horse. He looked straight at Marianne this time. He said: "I'm sorry I called you that."

"I was being that, wasn't I?"

"Sollarshill Sally. She's due quite soon; but of course you didn't know."

"Oh, Tim, has it hurt her?"

He took the reins. "Not very good for her; but I daresay she'll be all right." To Marianne's surprise he gave her a kind of half-smile. Then he put both his hands on the saddle and vaulted up, and once again he was right out of touch, formidable and remote as he said: "Go back through the gap, please, and leave it to me."

He rode over to the gipsy boys. Marianne watched him leaning down from his horse to talk to them and they, who hardly ever smiled, were grinning like imps at something he said.

Then they all three went among the cattle, Tim on his horse and the boys one on each side, a few yards wide of him. The boys hadn't got their sticks. All the time they kept their eyes on Tim, and now and then he signalled to them by waving or holding up his arm.

There was no shouting and the cattle never moved out of a walk, but soon all the big Herefords were back on the river bank and all Tommy's were standing together in the middle of the field. Then Tim nodded to the boys; they went ahead on the flanks as he rode up behind the cattle, which now ambled up to the gap and crackled through it.

Tim told the boys to drive them on to the far end of the meadow. He sat on his horse and watched Stan clumsily struggling to disentangle a roll of wire until at last he could stand it no longer.

He slid down off his horse and said: "Here, for goodness' sake, let me have a go." Once again he threw Marianne the reins; her only part in all this seemed to be that of horse-holder.

The horse impatiently tossed its head. Its big forefeet threatened Marianne's toes. It tugged at the reins. It was a very bright chestnut with a long mane and now, as it arched its neck and flexed its ears and rolled its eyes towards Marianne, it looked wild and beautiful. Marianne suddenly conceived a crazy ambition to get on its back.

Tim was preoccupied with the roll of wire. She called to him: "Do you mind if I walk your horse round?"

He said, "Of course not," without turning his head. She put her foot into the stirrup and the horse revolved in rapid circles. She stood on the stirrup and somehow wriggled up into the saddle. The horse danced about, she couldn't find the other stirrup, and the horse's shoulders, as it lifted both its forefeet off the ground, felt so powerful beneath her knees that she thought it could shoot her off like a stone out of a catapult.

Just then Tim looked round and said: "Good Lord, I thought you meant lead him."

The second stirrup conveniently swung itself over Marianne's shoe and she began to feel more at ease. Tim was watching her amusedly.

"Don't let him gallop," he said. "I race him, so he'd pull your arms out."

She walked the horse for a few yards and then it started throwing up its head and taking unpleasant little mincing steps which jigged her up and down. She eased the reins and immediately it began to trot very fast, then, with a terrifying plunge, went straight into a canter. She leaned back and pulled hard at the reins but the horse simply threw its head forward and lifted her out of the saddle.

Blackpool

by DOROTHY STRINGER

A hard town
Where the solid tide
Hammers on concrete;
Trams, clanking, ride
From pier to iron pier;
Brick stares with red-rimmed eye;
The Tower's black bones leap
clear;
The Dipper sweeps the sky.

A live town
Where a second tide
Flows round the whelk stalls,
Fills with noisy pride
The pubs and cinemas; a sea
Of drops blended yet free.
Vulgar with life, it beats
Through treeless streets.

All at once she was among Tommy's cattle, which scattered before her, and then she was approaching the hedge at the end of the field. She thought the horse was going to jump it, and that that would be the end. It turned away, however, and during this change of course she lost her offside stirrup and felt the iron thumping against her shin.

Before her now lay the gipsy caravans. There was some washing there, on a line. The horse shortened its pace as it approached the washing. It swerved, and went parallel with the clothes-line, twisting its head sideways in a most alarming way.

Then some large flapping thing in the nature of a camisole bellied out in the breeze. This was too much for the horse. It gave a tremendous bound, throwing Marianne on to its neck. She now lost the second stirrup and the reins, and was tenuously attached to the horse by means of one hand which grasped the cheek-strap and the other clasping a long lock of the creature's mane.

The river came into her view, flowing apparently at torrential speed, as the horse galloped upstream along the path which the fishermen used. Marianne gave a convulsive wriggle, rather like the last despairing protest of a fish on a line. This wriggle, against all probability, got her back into the saddle; at the same time she found the reins and seized them gratefully. In doing so she gave them a jerk to which the horse promptly responded with another change of course; it headed towards the gap where Tim and Stan and Robbie stood close together, making incomprehensible signals with their arms.

Fury at her ridiculous situation now took the place of her fear and, gripping the saddle until there was a sharp pain in her thighs, she leaned back and pulled at the horse's head. It came up slowly and she put all her strength into one more terrific heave. The effect was surprising. The horse was well-trained. It put both forefeet together, slid for a yard, and stopped dead. Marianne continued upon her way, over its ears.

Tim was there almost as soon as she met the ground. He fielded her half-volley just as she was rolling over for the second time. "Hurt?" he asked.

She didn't know if she was really hurt or not. Her hands went up and encountered Tim's hands, enormous round her waist; he didn't take them away and he continued to regard her with serious concentration. But there was a twitch of laughter behind his concern, and as soon as she shook her head he let the laughter go.

Marianne, in release from terror, started laughing too, and for an extraordinary moment she wasn't aware of Stan and Robbie looking on, or of Tim's hands round her waist, or of anything at all except a quite irrelevant happiness.

Then Tim stood away from her and the sudden strange happiness vanished. She was angry with Robbie and Stan, who were goofing at her as if she were a kind of exhibit.

Tim called to Robbie: "They'll be wanting you with the tractor, won't they, up in the hopyard?"

Robbie took it as an order, and, though as a rule you had to tell him three times before he would do anything, started the tractor straight away. Stan jumped up on the trailer.

Tim said to Marianne: "Are you okay to walk back?" He took her arm and led her away. "We've fixed the fence."

"Thank you."

He went on rather hesitantly: "Yes, but look, there may be a bit of a row."

"Your father?" she said.

"I don't want to tell him about it, but I've got to."

"Must you?" She was thinking that it would mean more trouble for Tommy, on top of everything else.

"Well, yes," said Tim. "Your cattle aren't T.T., are they?"

"No." It had been silly of her not to understand. The Sollars's herd was pedigree, of course, and tuberculin-tested. It mustn't come into contact with untested ones.

"It'll mean getting the vet, and perhaps re-inoculation, and all sorts of things." Tim looked round at Tommy's cattle and went on rather apologetically: "They are a bit scruffy, you know, Marianne. That one like a highwayman with the dark patch round its eyes—keep an eye on it."

"Why?"

"I don't know." He looked puzzled. He went towards the beast and shooed it. He watched it carefully as it ran away. "Just something not quite right," he said.

They went back towards the gipsy boys, who were holding Tim's horse. Marianne said: "What's he called?"

"The Joker," said Tim. "Would you like to ride him again?"

"What, after my performance?"

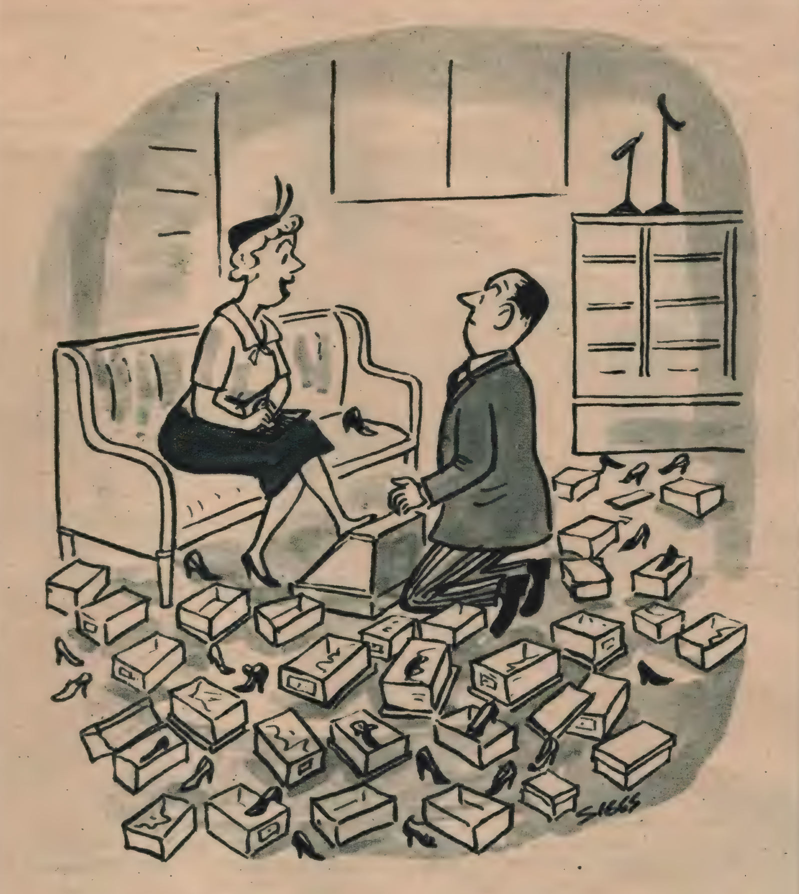
"Oh, it wasn't too bad."

He gave her one of those serious looks with the smile just twitching behind it. She giggled. She could have giggled at anything; her spirit felt like a kite tugging on the end of a string, up, up —it was flying away with her.

"I must get back," she said.

They said goodbye and she began to run home; she was much too happy for walking.

She was still running when she came



"I liked the first pair best . . . er—which *was* the first pair?"

to the gate by the crossroads and saw Tommy's car, with Uncle George sitting up very straight beside Tommy, turning the corner towards the Hope Farm. The back seat was piled with many suitcases, and a bicycle was lashed on to the back of the car. . . .

GEORGE liked buns, Tommy had said, as if he were speaking of an animal at the zoo; so Marianne had spent most of the morning baking them. They turned out heavy and horrible; but George's non-smoker's-non-drinker's appetite was sharpened by privation. He had obviously been too mean to buy lunch on the train. Marianne counted to herself, two, three, four, five, as he gobbled up the buns.

George was just as she had remembered him, lanky, stooping, all angles, knobbly—it was painful to imagine what his knees looked like. His receding hair gave him a high forehead which shone, and which even George's multitudinous worries had not been able to wrinkle. He worried about his health and about his job and about his money and about the world. It was no wonder he couldn't sleep.

He was saying earnestly to Tommy: "The insomnia gingers up the ulcer, and the ulcer in turn increases the tendency to insomnia. It's a vicious circle, you see."

Tommy was looking distraught already, after only two hours of George's company.

When George, replete at last, went upstairs to unpack, Marianne said: "How long's he staying?"

"I don't know. He wants to find out all about the state of the farm and my finances."

"Well, I should think that would take him simply ages," Marianne said.

"He's a rather difficult person to entertain," said Tommy, "and of course we must try to keep on the right side of him, whatever happens. He's brought his bicycle. I suppose you wouldn't, between now and dinner, care to take him for a bit of a ride?"

Marianne cocked an eye at Tommy and read what was in his mind. If he could get George out of the way, he could slip down to the Royal Victoria and fortify himself against the dreaded discussion with George which would obviously take place after late dinner.

But her bicycle in the shed had two flat tyres, and she was much too sore to sit on any more saddles. She told Tommy about her ride on Tim's chestnut. This cheered him up, and he laughed in his high squeaky way until the tears came into his eyes.

"So I can't bike," Marianne concluded. "But I'll tell you what. I'll take him for a walk round the hopyards, then you can go down to the pub for an hour without him knowing."

So, when George came down again, Marianne said invitingly: "What about coming down to the hopyard with me and having a look round? I think Father wants to put in an hour or two at his accounts."

George accepted with alacrity—and just then the telephone rang in the hall outside. Tommy went to the phone and Marianne heard him saying: "My dear fellow. . . . No, alas, they're not T.T. . . . Is it really as serious as all that?"

George was listening, and she thought it would give him a bad impression of the state of the farm if he learned about the cattle breaking through the hedge. So she said: "Come along, Uncle, or the pickers will have finished for the day."

As he followed her into the hall she could hear John Sollars's voice angrily crackling away. She slipped by quickly and opened the front door for George, and then Tommy began again: "I'm *really* sorry. . . . Yes, yes, I do realize . . . good fences make good neighbours. . . . I wouldn't have had it happen for worlds. . . ."

Next day Tommy went off to Ledbury at mid-morning to see his bank manager. It seemed that his special necessity to go to the bank arose out of his discussion with George last night: there were some deeds or documents which George wanted to see.

Marianne didn't know how Tommy had fared in his talk with George; she had gone to bed early and left them to it. But this morning George was looking grimmer than ever.

"I can't stand him in more than small doses," Tommy told Marianne. "He drives me mad, maggoty-mad." He added, wild-eyed and conspiratorial: "I'm going off now, but I'll be back by lunch-time. One-thirty, not a minute later! You'll see to it if anything goes wrong? But nothing will go wrong, I'm sure."

Almost everything did. Robbie drove the tractor into a deep ditch and it took six of the pickers half an hour to

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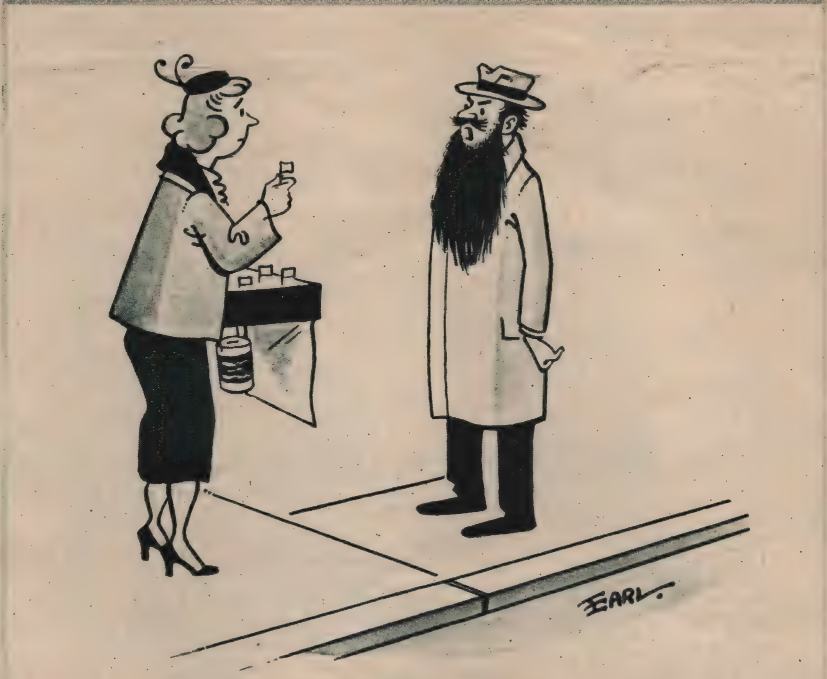

"I've already got one"

get it out. And the gipsies, who were all in murderous tempers and frequently fought among themselves, took advantage of Tommy's absence to bully Jake the busheller, saying that he was cheating them by filling the basket too full.

Marianne's domestic routine was also thrown into disorder. The rice pudding burned. George had demanded plain food, because of his ulcer, and Marianne hated cooking plain food. She had also done him a hash and, after waiting in vain for Tommy, they sat down to lunch at a quarter past two.

George had been prowling round the hopyard and talking to some of the children. He said: "They tell me—but I can't really believe it—that they're not going back to school till the end of the hop-picking?"

"Of course not."

"But don't their parents realize that they will be fined—heavily?"

"They're always fined," said Marianne. "But we pay the fines. It's worth it."

"You—your father—pays the fines?"

"All the farmers do."

George shook his head wearily and stared at her, masticating slowly.

She was serving him with the least-burned part of the rice pudding when she heard the garden gate open. She hoped it was Tommy, but then she saw Stan coming down the path. More trouble, she thought. She went to the back door, and Stan gaped at her and said: "Miss, there's a beast down in the medder. It can't get up."

"Sick?"

Stan nodded vigorously. "Yes, I saw it when I was going home for my dinner, Miss."

"I'd better have a look."

She ran back into the dining-room and told George she had to go out; he mumbled, with his mouth full, in reply. Then she hurried down the lane with Stan into the meadow. Opening the gate, she suddenly remembered what Tim had said yesterday: *Keep an eye on that one.*

She followed Stan across the field and, sure enough, it was the one with the dark patch, the one Tim had called the highwayman. It was standing with its head lowered and its forelegs wide apart. When she went near it, it moved a few paces awkwardly, and as it walked a long drip of saliva swung from its nose. It flicked its tail in little jerks. Its hindquarters were all mucky and, running down its legs, Marianne saw with horror, there were streaks of blood.

She thought at once: *My God, if it's infectious. . . . Sollarshill Sally and all those pedigree Herefords!*

It seemed important that Tim should be told at once. In any case she didn't know what to do about the sick beast, and with Tommy away Tim was the only person she could turn to.

"Look, Stan," she said, "it's only a little way up the hill to Mr. Sollars's hopyard. I want you to find Mr. Sollars, young Mr. Sollars, and tell him what's happened and ask him to come down quickly. I'll wait here."

Stan nodded energetically.

"And run, Stan, please."

To be continued next week

Dead on the doorstep

Continued from page 9

defenceless. He turned a pair of mild foggy eyes on Clarence, who turned a pair of mild misty eyes back. "You're the lady's brother I take it, sir?"

Clarence nodded.

"I didn't think you were her husband," mused the inspector. "Fine woman that." He sighed.

"Yes," agreed Clarence, and sighed too. "I've got a garden room at the foot of the garden," he added, and Mr. Pallett nodded an understanding head. "I thought I'd have a little place of my own," Clarence continued sadly, "just to get out of the way on occasion, you know."

"Very wise, sir," said the chief inspector. "Very wise."

"You must come down," said Clarence. "Very comfortable, it is. I've got my desk and my books, and radio and a portable television. It's a real hide-away."

Miss Abel came bustling in with a fresh pot of tea. "Now what is it you wanted to know, Inspector?" she asked, sitting bolt upright in her chair.

"Everything, I suppose, ma'am—everything," said the inspector blowing an apology on his nose. "You just tell me everything that happened."

"Well, we had lunch at one sharp," said Miss Abel. "Afterwards Clarence went out down the garden to his room. I turned out the bedrooms. I had the vacuum on. I heard someone calling my name and went into the hall. Mrs. Beresford was just coming in from the kitchen. She looked very upset.

"'Oh, Miss Abel,' she said, 'come quickly. Someone's shot Harry.'

"I asked her if he was badly hurt.

"'He's dead,' she said.

"I didn't hesitate," said Miss Abel. "I went and dialled nine-nine-nine and asked for the police. I then came back to Mrs. Beresford, who was sitting in the chair you're now in."

"Oh dear," said the inspector, looking down at it with concern.

"She was crying but wasn't too distressed. Oh, I forgot—I had rung the bell that calls Clarence from his shed."

Clarence nodded as if he were used

to being forgotten. "I came indoors at once," he said.

"I said to Mrs. Beresford," continued his sister, brushing him aside, "'What has happened?' And she said there'd been a ring at the front doorbell and her husband went to answer it. She was busy at the back—cake-making, I believe. You know the noise those mixers make; she didn't hear who it was, but suddenly there was a shot. She thought it was a car, but next moment there was a whole succession of shots and she ran out.

"Her husband was lying on the mat and blood was already spreading out around him. As she went on her knees to try to help him, she had an impression that a man ran away down the path between the trees, a man in a rather prominent check coat and with a green soft hat.

"Right from the start she knew her husband was dead; there couldn't be any doubt of that.

"Well, when she'd recovered herself a bit she jumped up and ran to the telephone which is on their hall table, but she couldn't get a reply. She wasted a moment or two jogging the rest up and down, then she realized it was out of order and came running across to me."

"I'd come into the room by then," said Clarence. "It was still only a matter of minutes since it happened, and I reckoned there was still a chance of picking that man up in the neighbourhood. I said I'd phone the police again and get them to throw out a cordon and stop a man of the description I could give them."

"You could give them a description?" said the inspector open-mouthed. "Did you see him then?"

"Not today," said Clarence, "but my sister had seen him a day or two ago and she'd described him to me. But I never put that telephone call through, unfortunately, for Mrs. Beresford, who'd been sitting quite quiet until then, suddenly went into screaming hysterics. I knew," said Clarence demurely, "that my sister could handle Mrs. Beresford much better than I could, so I went across the road to the Beresfords'.

"The police car arrived just at that moment. There didn't seem much I could do, so I went for my walk on the heath as usual."

"Thank you, sir," said the chief inspector. "Now, what about this man?"

"Oh, he's the fellow right enough," broke in Miss Abel, defying even the Lord Chief Justice to maintain otherwise. "The other morning there was a knock. I went to the door, Clarence being down in his shed, as usual. . . ." Clarence wriggled deprecatingly, and Miss Abel went on: "An extraordinary type stood there. He was very tall and had a long overcoat almost to his ankles, of a loud check pattern. He had a soft green hat pulled down over his forehead, dark glasses and a muffler so high it covered his chin. He gave me quite a turn the way he stood there muttering to himself.

"'Where's your husband,' he asked.

"'I haven't got a husband,' I told him." Miss Abel sounded grossly insulted at the suggestion. "'And what do you want? What's your business?'

"I noticed he kept his hand in his overcoat pocket like those gangster men on the films.

"'Beresford,' he said. 'I want Beresford. Where is he?'

"'You've come to the wrong house,' I said. 'They live opposite,' and I banged the door in his face. From the window I saw him shambling off among the trees, giving a little quick run every now and then."

Miss Abel took a deep breath. "Everything he did was odd. I thought he was touched in the head. I realized he wasn't the sort of man to send on to neighbours without warning them, especially if Mr. Beresford was out, so I took a stout stick from the hall stand and went across to their house.

"The man was at the door talking to Mrs. Beresford, and I heard her say: 'I tell you he's out and I don't know when he'll be back. No, you can't come in and wait—and take your foot out of the door.' It seemed to me he was trying to force his way in, so I went forward.

"'Is this man troubling you, Mrs. Beresford?' I asked, and he jumped round and glared at me in the most peculiar way. Then he saw I wasn't going to stand any nonsense and he muttered something and ran off, brushing against me so hard that he nearly sent me flying."

"No!" said Mr. Pallett, looking at her magnificent proportions with awe.

"I asked Mrs. Beresford if she knew the man but she said she didn't, but that her husband was a turf accountant, which brought him into contact with some odd characters from time to time. And lately he had had a threatening letter or two. I'm sure that's your man, Inspector."

"It certainly sounds like it," said the chief inspector. "Nice place you have here, ma'am, and so spotless—it certainly does you credit, if I may make so bold, ma'am."

"I'll show you round," beamed Miss Abel. . . .

"Spotless, spotless," murmured the chief inspector returning, shutting his eyes as if to retain their delight. "Now what about showing me your place, sir?"

"Delighted," said Clarence.

The inspector retrieved his shoes with the umbrella standing by the side of them. At the end of the garden they come on to Clarence's kingdom.

"Now this," said the chief inspector, trampling boldly in, shoes and all, "is what I call comfort."

"Try that chair," said Mr. Abel, "you can put your head on the cushion—if anything gets greasy it'll be your head. Stick your feet up on the other. Let me see,"—he consulted his watch—"they're open." And from a shelf above the desk he took down a box file marked *Interior Decorations*, and produced from it a bottle of whisky, two glasses, and—as an afterthought—a bottle of deodorant tablets.

"Now then, sir," said the chief inspector, settling down with his glass, "let's hear what you made of the Beresfords."

Clarence pondered. "Well—as for him, he wasn't a bad sort. Getting on a bit . . . easygoing . . . not quite out

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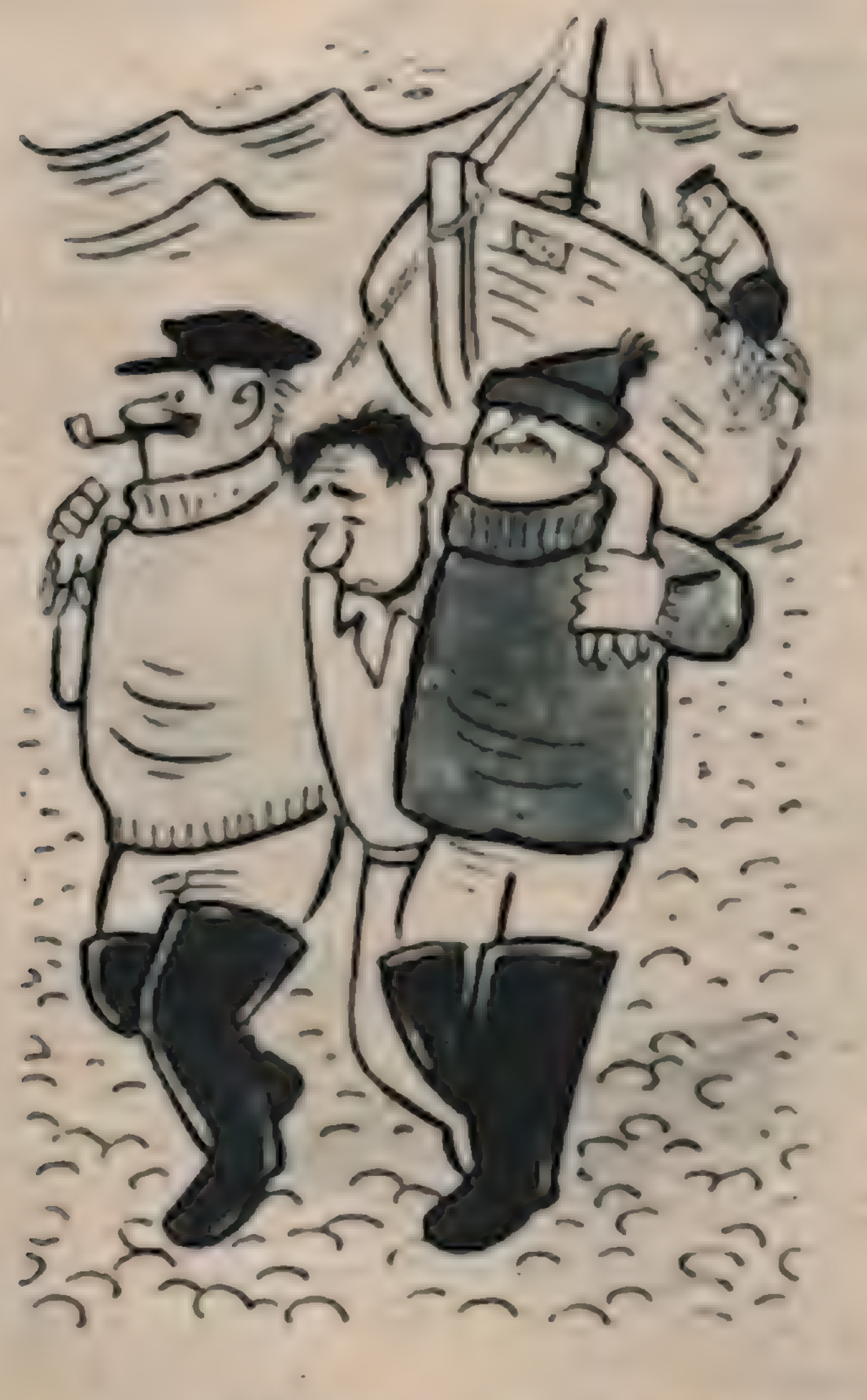

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WHY?

Ye ANTIQUE SHOPPE
SIGGS

A FORTNIGHT before their parents' silver wedding, Jean and her sister saw an ideal present for them in an antique shop — a large silver tureen.

Jean told the dealer that she wanted to buy the tureen and asked him if he would put it aside for her. She even offered him a deposit.

The dealer refused the deposit, but told her that the tureen was hers and he would put it aside for her, though he would like to keep it in the window for display purposes.

When Jean came in with the money on the eve of the silver wedding, the dealer said he was sorry, but someone had offered him more money for the tureen and he had sold it. Jean sued him for breaking his contract.

"Nonsense," said the dealer in court. "There was no contract as there was nothing in writing. It would have been different if I had given this lady an invoice."

But Jean won her case.

WHY? *A barrister explains the judge's ruling on page 29*

of the top drawer perhaps. A rough diamond with yearnings for polish. Very much in love with her, of course."

"And the lady?"

"Been on the stage. But don't get me wrong; she wasn't the chorus-girl type who'd managed to collar an elderly bookie. Quite the reverse; very refined, very elegant. Cold as charity, affection doled out in suitable deliberate rations to hubby as paid for. Yet she had the sort of mouth that looked as if she could let herself go on occasion." He looked at the inspector. "You know there's one thing that an elderly bachelor gets to recognize at sight—and that's a man-trap."

"And Mrs. Beresford was a man-trap, eh?"

"Could be. I didn't have enough money or anything else to interest her. I just had that feeling, that's all. She used to be in and out quite a bit to see my sister. My sister had a fancy for her. But I didn't like her and she didn't like me."

Clarence's tone sounded unduly bitter; the chief inspector gazed thoughtfully at the depressed-looking features of his brolly—perhaps at one time Clarence would have liked the elegant Mrs. Beresford to have taken a little more favourable notice of him.

"Did Mrs. Beresford have any friends or callers?" he asked. "Or did she go out regularly—during the day, when hubby might be absent?"

"She went to her mother's once or twice a week," said Clarence. "I know because she used to tell my sister, who'd take in deliveries for her. You can check with her mother, I suppose, although she's bound to confirm whatever her daughter says."

"We could always ask the mother's neighbours," said the inspector.

"Yes," said Clarence. He went on meaningly: "You know, I didn't quite believe in that fit of hysterics she threw. I thought it was to head me off from phoning the police again—to give somebody a good chance of getting clear."

"Surely not, sir," said the chief inspector. "You don't mean she was covering up for that man?"

"Yes," said Clarence.

The inspector took a deodorant tablet and chewed solemnly.

"You don't believe it was that man, do you?" said Clarence.

"No," said the chief inspector.

"But he really existed," urged Clarence. "After all, my sister saw him, and she wouldn't be making it up."

"I wouldn't suggest that for a moment," said the chief inspector hurriedly. "But doesn't it occur to you how much he went out of his way to be noticed—the time when he came and didn't do the murder—and how invisible he was when he did do it. It's altogether too simple—and I've learned to distrust simple cases. . . ."

The chief inspector was back two or three days later. "Hallo, sir," he said, appearing at the door of Clarence's retreat. "I hope you don't mind my coming round here. I didn't want to tramp through the house."

"Glad to see you, Inspector," said Clarence, nodding towards the chair.

"You were so helpful the other day," said the chief inspector, "I thought I'd let you know—about the Beresford case, I mean. We checked up on the lady's visits to her mother. She hadn't been seen there more than twice in six months. So she'd evidently been somewhere else, eh? We checked the rep company the lady was acting with. They hadn't seen her, but we found out she had a boy-friend while she was with them—also a member of the company. Everyone was surprised when she cleared off and married Beresford—they were still more surprised at the quiet way the boy-friend took it.

"Boy-friend had left the company, but we traced him. He was with another company on the north side of London. *And* we soon found traces of her, too; his landlady recognized her photo at once. She was out there regularly, once or twice a week." The inspector paused. "I had a look in his wardrobe. First thing I saw was a long check overcoat."

"It seems he did care, then," said Clarence. "Enough to come over and shoot poor Beresford."

"That's what we thought," said the inspector sadly, "but, of course, we checked up on his moves that day."

"And he had an alibi."

"I'll say he did," said the inspector, not without appreciation. "At three o'clock that afternoon, when the shooting took place, he was on television in some women's show or other. Oh, yes, we were on to that, too—it was a *live* show, all right—no mistake."

"Well, really," said Clarence helplessly and then after a moment began to laugh. "If you're going to have an alibi have a good one. Well, what do you make of it now?"

"I think, sir," said Mr. Pallett solemnly, "that we've been taken up the garden path—twice. If we swallowed the story of the mysterious lunatic, very well. If we saw a bit through it and traced the man, then the shooting occurred at the very time when he had the finest alibi any man could have. Obviously, he didn't shoot Beresford."

HOLIDAYS—3

It is only during a holiday that many of us become victims of a passion for the strenuous life.

Robert Lynd

"And equally obviously Beresford was shot," said Clarence.

"And equally obviously," said the chief inspector gently, "Mrs. Beresford did it. She just slipped out by the kitchen door—leaving the mixer working no doubt—probably came down to the road and looked up it to make sure nobody was about and then went back and rang her own front door bell. When Beresford answered it, she shot him down. Hence the number of shots fired close to—she had to make sure he didn't talk."

"And where do we go from there?" asked Clarence.

"It seems," sighed the chief inspector, "almost the perfect murder. Now she collars all old Beresford's money and she and the boy-friend go off in due course to enjoy it. As so often, we may suspect, but we've got to prove—beyond all reasonable doubt. And only two people were present at the shooting. One's dead and can't talk, the other's alive and won't."

"There was a third party," said Clarence thoughtfully. "The revolver. She wouldn't have had time to get rid of it. It must be about the place somewhere. If you can only find that. It might not talk—but you might get her to. . . ."

It was a pity, declared Miss Abel later, that the police hadn't something better to do; not only had they gone over every inch of the Beresford house, even taking up the floorboards and taking out the bath and fireplaces, but they'd dug over the garden until it was absolutely ruined. And there was poor Mrs. Beresford, not allowed near the place and having to stay at her mother's. What on earth did they expect to find?

"The revolver, I suppose," said Clarence looking over the gate at the toiling policeman.

"What revolver?" snapped Miss Abel—really, men were so stupid. As if the man would have left that behind. . . .

"We haven't found it," said the chief inspector later, in the privacy of the garden room.

"Which means it isn't there."

"Thank you sir. Yes, I think we can take that for granted."

"Then if it isn't there, it's somewhere else," said Clarence, starting slowly and gathering speed. "In other words she brought it out of the house with her. And that," he went on slowly, sitting up, "was why the telephone wire was cut. It gave her a legitimate excuse to come out of the house and across to us to dump the revolver. It wasn't on her, that's certain. My sister undid all sorts of things when Mrs. Beresford was having hysterics, and she'd have found it."

"Perhaps she pushed it down behind the cushions of the chair she sat in," suggested the inspector innocently.

"My dear Chief Inspector," said Clarence austerely, "not once a week, not once a day, but a dozen times an hour every chair in this house is given a going-over with vacuum, brush, and broom in search of the most minute crumb. Do you think a revolver would escape detection?"

"Then she stowed it away somewhere outside your house," said the chief inspector hurriedly.

"Meaning you want to give my garden the same going over as you have done the Beresfords'," Clarence said. "No. I have a better idea, Chief Inspector. I suggest we let Mrs. Beresford find the revolver for us."

"That would be a convenience," sighed the chief inspector. "She's coming back to live there next week, but how do we get her to perform?"

"I think a word dropped in confidence in a certain direction might get back to Mrs. Beresford and send her scuttling out of cover."

"Meaning through your sister, sir," the chief inspector gazed at him reproachfully.

"Of course," said Clarence. "I have always found that people whose jobs involve them in a large amount of professional secrecy are always the most indiscreet once they are released from bondage. I'll let you know when I feel the seed has been sown, but then I'm afraid we shall have to wait a bit—for the first really wet night."

"Just so," said the chief inspector, not understanding. . . .

CLARENCE and the chief inspector were crouched side by side behind the coal bunker. The world seemed to be dissolving about them—rain hit with pitiless little hammers all about them and gushed down from the rainwater pipe into the butt by the wall until it spattered out over the side.

They spent an uncomfortable couple of hours. Then, just on midnight, they heard footsteps coming from the garden path. Unconsciously Clarence carried the beat of the footsteps in his mind and judged that the person approaching was now immediately before them where they huddled soaked and tense behind the bunker.

There was a rustling noise. Someone was removing a mackintosh—an extraordinary proceeding on such a night. Against the blackness, Clarence thought he saw a still darker form that suddenly lifted upwards as if it were swarming up the very side of the house. But, except for the splash of water and the hiss of rain, there was silence.

"Now," whispered Clarence, and with the chief inspector he stood up, his torch stabbing the darkness.

Mrs. Beresford in a fetching two-piece bathing suit was rising Venus-like out of the rainwater butt and stepped dripping out with the revolver in her hand.

"You see," said Clarence, "why it had to be a wet night. When she could get it without us hearing. . . ."

"No doubt," said Clarence later that night over the hot cups of cocoa Miss Abel had prescribed and prepared to keep colds at bay, "Mrs. Beresford intended to come back at her convenience and dispose of the weapon. We are due to go on holiday in a few weeks' time. Meanwhile the weapon was quite safe where it was. Then, when my sister hinted that we were continuing our search for the revolver over here, she took fright."

Clarence rose from his chair. "This," he declared, "calls for a celebration." He went to the bookcase and took out a heavy calf-bound volume and from its interior produced a silver flask and two collapsible cups.

The door opened. Miss Abel appeared, clad in a dressing-gown. "I had to come down," she said, "I couldn't sleep with the thought of you men leaving those dirty cocoa cups all night." Then she glared at the flask and stiffened.

"I always carry it with me, ma'am," said the chief inspector humbly, "in case of accident. I persuaded your brother just to take a tot." He rose, slipped the flask into his pocket, collapsed the cups, and under Miss Abel's baleful glare went out into the night.

It was the least one man could do for another.

THE END

The secret invaders

Continued from page 6

Baillie-Grohman went to see Admiral Cunningham, Willmott called on Captain Sydney Raw, commander of the 1st Submarine Flotilla. Far from defending his precious submarines from Willmott's obvious designs on one of them, he was interested. Syd Raw thought for a moment and said: "A dinghy's not much use—won't go down the hatch. How about a collapsible canoe? You can stow it inboard."

He looked at Willmott, musing, and his sly smile showed. "Layforce have just the man to help you with that. He used to hunt African big game in a canoe. Fellow called Courtney."

Courtney was a Commando officer with Layforce, the division marked down for the invasion of Rhodes. It was under canvas at Kabrit, on the Great Bitter Lake. As soon as Willmott landed back in Cairo he got into a car and drove up there. His four days' notice to go had been lengthened, mercifully, to a fortnight.

Courtney was a massive man. He unbent from pondering over the framework of a canvas canoe and eyed Willmott. He had heavy shoulders, thick muscular arms, a red, weatherbeaten face, and a great bull-roar of a laugh. He was a hunter-explorer. This was the Courtney who had canoed the Nile from Victoria Falls to Cairo, and shot lions from his boat.

He came out of his tent, wiping his hands on his trousers, and followed Willmott docilely enough. They walked till they were clear of the camp.

Willmott said: "We want to take a look at some enemy coasts. I'd like to ask you about your canoes. . . ."

At the end of an hour he had not only his canoe, but a paddler to go with it. Courtney did not take long to catch fire. "Listen," he said earnestly, "I've paddled so close to rhino, I could spit on 'em. And they're a hell of a lot more wide-awake than any sentry. Come on!"

That afternoon they paddled out on the lake in one of his canvas canoes. By nightfall Nigel Willmott had already succeeded, if clumsily, in getting back into an empty canoe. And then, with Courtney aboard to give it balance, he learned to vault astride it, Western-style, as if he were mounting a wild horse.

HOLIDAYS—4

At the beginning of a day off,
all things are possible.

Charles Morgan

When they had dressed Willmott pitched away a cigarette. He said: "The only problem is—how will it stand up to weather? An open canoe like this'd be swamped in any sort of a sea."

Courtney grinned. "You'll get ulcers if you worry like that," he said easily. "What's a little wetting? It'll be fine on the night."

That was the start of two weeks' hectic preparation. Courtney and Willmott travelled straight to Alexandria. The commander-in-chief had still to bless their enterprise; they had to gamble on that and work like fury.

First, they had to work up a completely novel drill for landing, then meeting up again—"homing" they called it—and rendezvousing with their submarine. They had to seaproof torches, watches and compasses to withstand a pressure test in five feet of water. They had to devise a means of sketching in water. There was the matter of what sort of clothing they should wear, to be able to stay in the water for up to four hours. Willmott finally settled on a white sweater and long woollen underpants, all soaked in grease, plus a waistcoat-type lifebelt. It was clumsy and heavy. After floundering in the sea in this outfit for long, they still got terribly cold.

Under Courtney's schooling, Willmott began to learn stalking. Every night they went out on exercises, playing hide-and-seek on the beaches near Alexandria.

Towards the end of this stage of their work Willmott found that he could come swimming in, crawl up the beach in the dark and get around behind Courtney in his sentry's position almost twice as often as he was spotted. If he stayed still in the water, Courtney could even come down and shine his torch into the sea without seeing him.

Their torches, waterproofed and shaded, were to be used for signalling seaward—Willmott from the shallows to the canoe, and from the canoe when flashing up the submarine.

The day at last came to clamber on to the casing of the submarine Triumph at her moorings in Alexandria Harbour for the final stage of their drill—a few days and nights of training at sea.

On the last night the submarine slipped quietly between the dark outer islands of the Dodecanese. At dawn they moved in for a close look at Rhodes. The island looked peaceful.

Then three bombers swept up from behind the low hills at the back of the town of Rhodes and came heading straight towards them, skimming the water, only fifty feet above it. Stukas!

Already, the submarine commander, Lieutenant - Commander "Sammy" Woods, was barking out: "Dive-dive-dive!" They were on their way down to the sixty feet that was *de rigueur* for submarines in these clear waters.

No bombs escorted them down. But throughout the day, edging about to get a look at their beaches, they had to dive continuously at the sudden sight of bombers. Between these alarms they studied the landing beaches.

The first was a small bay. It lay around a promontory from the harbour—a steep shingle beach. A road hugging the bay curled to it from the half-hidden town. Above the beach an hotel shone, bleached white in the sun; the Hôtel des Roses, once the resort of the richer tourists—now the Axis Headquarters.

The Triumph sidled south to con the harbour. From a high white mole, outflung like a protecting arm, a boom jutted across the harbour entrance. Inside it was packed with fishing craft, and here and there were the squat shapes of the E-boats.

"Right," Willmott said. "That's enough. We lay up till tonight." They sank down into the protecting green depths and turned out to sea. . . .

It was a fine night. A slight swell slapped the bows. It was so dark that Willmott, from the conning tower, could just see the burly outline of Courtney below him helping the ratings lift the canoe up from the torpedo compartment on to the casing. They got it out and moved around it, assembling it.

Four miles offshore, the Triumph slowed and began to trim down until the casing was almost awash so that the canoe could be launched.

Rhodes was a little cluster of lights. The blackout in the civilian quarter was poor. It must have been bad for Sammy Woods with sixty-odd lives in his hands and the Triumph sitting starkly on the surface with men out on her casing and both hatches open, opposite an enemy harbour. The captain stirred and leaned forward. He murmured: "Stop engines. Switch off fans. No talking."

Willmott clambered down on to the casing.

The canoe was launched. It pitched and bobbed on the swell while two ratings, lying flat on the hydroplane fins, tried to keep it steady.

Willmott went first. He jumped as the sea lifted the canoe and let his feet give under him the moment he felt them touch. As he sat heavily down, the canoe wobbled crazily and the rating near him clawed outward to help to steady it. The sea lifted them again and Courtney's great bulk came down behind him with a whack; again the canoe bucked and yawed under them and they rode it like a startled horse. A seaman handed down the double-bladed paddles, then their binoculars. The vacuum flasks, food, infra-red signal boxes, the grenades

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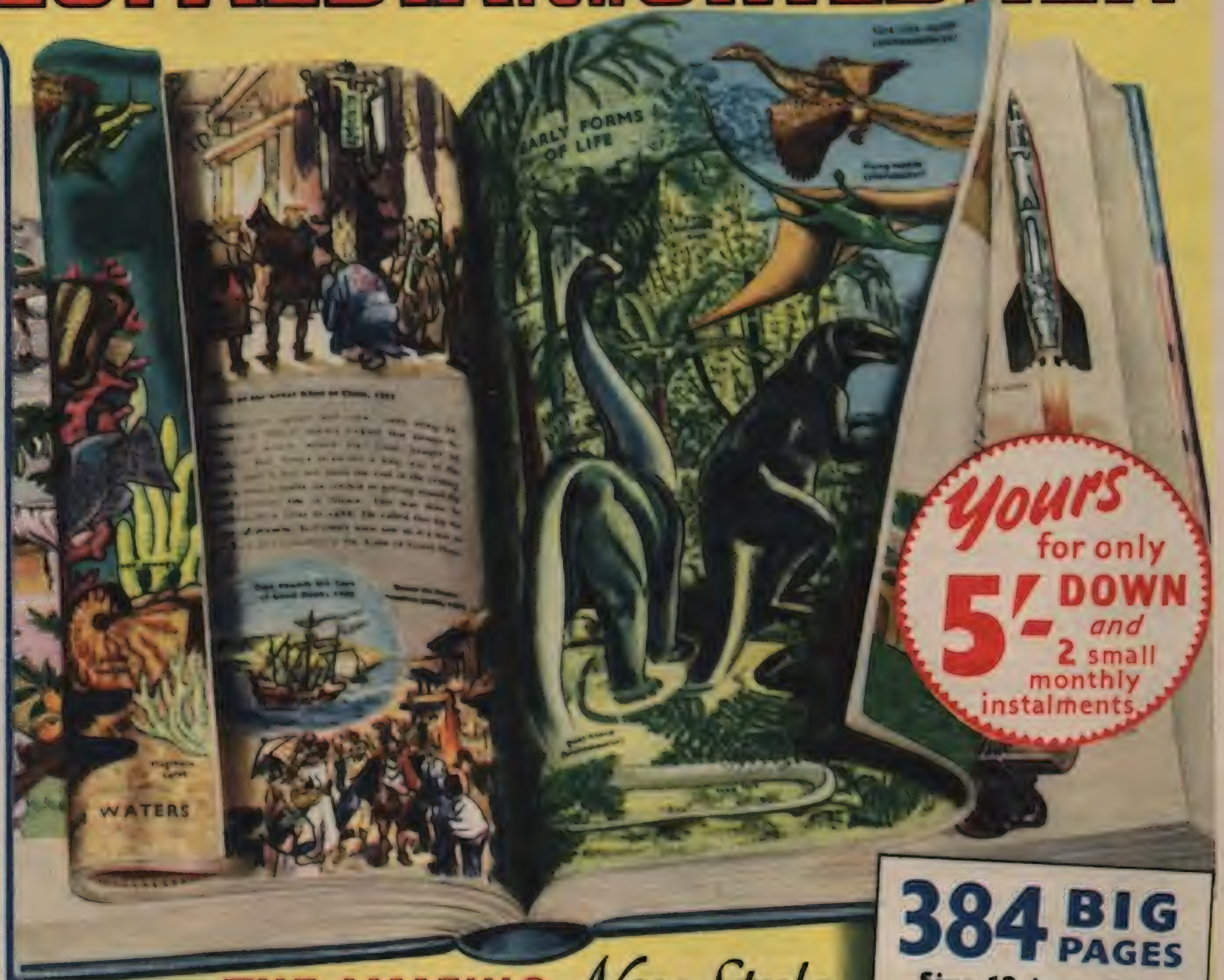

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"Oh, Charles wouldn't know what to do with himself without his little garden"

and the tommy gun were already stowed.

They cast off, digging their double-bladed paddles into the swell. They worked easily together, paddling this side, that side, in the long, swinging rhythm that they had developed into an immaculate drill off Alexandria. They moved into a patch of heavy swell and the canoe corkscrewed, slithering sideways into the hollows with the waves clapping against the canvas sides and blowing cold spray.

There was the black mass of the port now, its vague building shapes sprawling and thinning as the eye travelled along the coast road. A car moved along it, lights dimmed. Near the shadowy cube of the Hôtel des Roses it stopped, turned and disappeared.

By this time they were both sweating inside their greased woollens. Willmott raised his hand and they stopped, drifting silently with their paddles across the gunwhales while he unhooked his masked torch. He held it low down in the bottom of the canoe and shone it over the silhouette sketches he had made earlier that day through their periscope.

Now they could see the harbour clearly, flanked by its high white mole and the dark rocks of the point. There were the square port buildings and the long, low outlines of the warehouses.

They slid their paddles gently through the water to avoid stirring up phosphorescence. They came right up to the boom and went along it, staring in at the silent harbour. It was eerily void of life. They turned away and stroked quietly until they were opposite the promontory, silently riding the swell, a mere hundred yards out.

Now, Willmott shipped his paddle. He would go in to explore the point first. They would want to land tanks early in the coming assault, and it was here that they might be able to put them ashore—if the shingle presented no danger to tank tracks, and the beach was neither too steep nor too rocky. He held his watch to his ear, checked his time with Courtney's and tested his torch beam on the floor of the canoe.

Then, gingerly, he lifted his legs, and twisted about to lie across the canoe on his stomach. Then, while Courtney leaned his own bulk the other way, he slithered into the water.

It was impossible to avoid a splash. But more shocking than the noise he made was the sudden icy embrace of the sea, which engulfed him through the woollen clothing and took his breath away.

"All right?" Courtney whispered.

"Yes. See you later." He let go and turned, kicked away with his feet and began breast-stroking slowly towards the tumble of dark rocks on the promontory.

He let his feet sink, feeling for submerged rocks, and paddled on with his hands. Then his toes touched in the shallows and as he looked around him he had his first answer. The land on the point reared far too sharply above him. Great jagged rocks strewed the shore closely enough to forbid tanks. But it might make a landing-place for Commandos.

While he wallowed in the shallows below the rocks he took his first close view of the beach which curved away around the bay to the unseen hotel headquarters on the far side. The beach was narrow but it rose sharply to a wall edging the coastal road. A faint wavy line of shingle piled along the wall reached nearly to the top.

Willmott backed into the water on his hands. Offshore he swam away from the point in a slow, wide sweep until he was well out in the bay and he could turn and approach the beach from seawards along a line from which the landing craft would be coming. He took it very carefully now, probing for the bottom with his feet; when they touched sand he began estimating the depth under him and how evenly it shelved as he worked quietly towards the water's edge.

At the bottom of the beach he lay still, with the waves crumbling gently over him. Then, for the first time, he heard sentries. A man hawked and spat and grumbled something with a sad German cadence. Willmott's chin lay on the pebbles, his eyes staring. He saw them then—two helmeted figures standing up on the road beyond the wall, their short rifles slung.

He kept his eyes glued on them, hardly daring to blink, while he listened for the water sounds behind him. There was the hiss of pebbles running back with the water, then a suspense, a hush. A wavelet was gathering, and as it broke he slithered forward. He worked his way up the shingle in jerks, moving only as a wave slapped the beach.

This was the part they'd said was crazy—impossible. Only he and Courtney, who had tried it out against each other, knew it could be done.

He was halfway up the shingle, lying like a beached seal, when the sentries turned and looked at him. Their faces were shadowed by their helmets, but Willmott felt rather than saw their eyes. He clenched his fists and hung on desperately to the memory of how Courtney's vast bulk had looked to him on the beach at Alexandria. As long as he lay still, it just looked like a rock. He clamped his teeth and lay rigidly motionless.

The sentries turned away and wandered down the road. Slowly, still moving with the wave-break, Willmott crawled to the top of the beach.

In the shadow of the wall he raised himself up and peered around a pile of stones. The sentries were a bare ten yards away from him, on the other side of the road. They were muttering gently to each other and the taller one laughed suddenly and stamped his feet. He said, so precisely clear that even Willmott understood, "*Ach ja, du. . . .*" The rest died off in mumbling German.

Then there was the noise of a truck engine. It grew louder and rumbled past him, empty clanking, and faded into the distance. Faintly he heard it stop at the gates to the hotel grounds. As he looked after it Willmott spotted two more figures patrolling the road. Sentries were posted every 150 yards.

He back-pedalled towards the sea again, and once more the breeze gusted through him till he was numb and shaking like a man in a fit. His aching jaws could no longer suppress his chattering and he dug his face into the shingle to smother it. It's all right, he kept telling himself. Nobody more than a few yards away will hear it. He paused and let the trembling have its way for a while and retreated on his elbows towards the water.

He swam out again and began the real drudgery of his reconnaissance, checking the evenness of the beach gradient by wading, crouched, into the shallows and out again. In this way, he tacked in and out from the water's edge along the bay.

Then he found a shoal. It was about fifteen yards offshore, where the water suddenly shallowed to less than two feet. If any landing craft grounded on this, the first tanks to drive off would founder and drown in deep water.

He thought grimly: This is a story to tell them next time they ask what in hell's the use of an inshore recce. He waded along the shoal till it tapered off into deeper water, and he stared landward to fix where it ended.

His next trip in was to the hotel. It loomed before him, grey and square in the night against the pinpricks of stars. Intelligence had it that the Hôtel des Roses was the German-Italian headquarters for the island. The sentries were bound to be a bit thicker around here. He came inching up the beach again, over the wall and on to the hotel lawn. He lay on his belly on the grass. It smelled sweet and it muffled his movements. It would also muffle the boots of an approaching sentry.

Willmott slithered among the tamarisks lining the wall, looking for gun positions, barbed wire, traps. A chill wind soughed in the trees. Above it he could hear boots scraping on gravel. The sentries were posted in close to the building. He heard a muttering from the direction of the lobby and a sudden yawn from a balcony, but otherwise the hotel slept. Willmott slid back towards the sea. . . .

Courtney's robust optimism began to play him false as he strained his eyes after Willmott, watching him bob and fade in the darkness. He had three hours to wait.

One thing you could never train for was the waiting off the enemy coast, the not-knowing for three hours what was happening until at last you saw the glow of the other man's shielded torch. Three hours, sitting there, while strange visions crept through your mind. He took up his paddle, quietly turned the boat away, and glided out to a more discreet distance.

The silence from the island was almost total. He began to hiss a tune between his teeth, but it was no use kidding himself that this was very like the times he had boated up the Nile and shot for game. His heart was beating for Willmott, whom he liked for his shy intentness on his job; who was so different from himself, and whom he consequently feared for here—a pale, learned fellow whose every physical aptness was a surprise, and who had the cheek to suppose himself capable for this sort of lark. A man who had looked at him once, for a brief moment, down in the submarine, and said: "If the waiting bothers you—try praying." And meant it.

He must have held on like that for a tormented hour, listening to the drip of his paddles and straining for any noise from the distant beach, before his anxious stomach finally erupted and he vomited.

The nausea welled and swamped him again and again, and he heard the vile spasms echo across the water. . . .

When finally Willmott looked again at his watch and took to the sea to meet Courtney, he had been to the top of the beach four times. The recce had taken him a full three hours.

The benzedrine he had taken before leaving the submarine was slowly beginning to wear off. In spite of the cold, he found himself beginning to flounder drowsily and once or twice his arms broke the surface and splashed carelessly. It alarmed and alerted him to keep fighting the fatigue.

About two hundred yards off the beach he unhooked his torch and started flashing a Morse "R" to seaward, over a wide arc, holding the torch in his upstretched arm. After five minutes of this, changing grips, both arms were aching intolerably.

After ten minutes, a cold anxiety seeped through his tiredness. He wondered if Courtney had drifted too far out of position, had somehow crossed him and was inside him, nearer the beach. It seemed hardly possible that an enemy patrol boat had got him; if that had happened, he would have heard *some* sort of commotion.

He decided to stick it out with his signals for another five minutes, and hope that no incoming enemy boat would spot his flashes. If at the end of it Courtney still hadn't "homed" to him, he would try and get across the bay to the alternative rendezvous they had fixed.

Then he heard the stealthy paddling. He turned towards the sound of it with the torch and kept flashing. Suddenly there was Courtney's beefy torso and a whirling paddle, bearing down on him in the morning darkness.

Heavily, with a last great effort, Willmott heaved himself over the stern and lay down. After a while he pulled himself properly into his seat and grasped the whisky flask that Courtney passed back to him. He drank and it stung his mouth a bit, but he was so cold that he didn't even feel it going down. Then he swilled some coffee out of the vacuum flask. That was better. It was hot and laced with brandy.

Fighting their exhaustion, they began to paddle out to sea. When they reached their rendezvous position Courtney pulled out their infra-red gear and started to flash the recovery signal. His transmitter was a simple gadget, like an Aldis lamp with an infra-red screen. Behind him Willmott trained the receiver, shaped like a box camera, to his eye, and roved it over the sea, watching for the Triumph's

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WHY?

See page 26

Because, said the judge, it did not matter that there was nothing in writing, provided there had been a contract between Jean and the dealer. And there was such a contract when the dealer told Jean that the tureen was hers. Contrary to popular belief, only rarely do contracts have to be in writing—though, of course, written contracts are much easier to enforce.

(This ruling is based on actual cases)

signal to appear as a green light on its screen. After five minutes' sweeping the horizon like that, a flashing spot appeared and passed across the screen.

"Got it," he said. "Flash a bit farther to port, Roger."

They heard the quiet slow wash of the submarine coming towards them over the still water. Then they saw the tower of the Triumph growing larger in the sea. . . .

There were two more nights of this. On the last night it was Roger Courtney who ventured ashore at a beach twenty miles farther south.

After he had lowered his vast frame into the dark glassy sea and swum off, Willmott whiled away the waiting by producing a line which he dropped over the side at intervals as he paddled, taking depth soundings.

It was deathly calm, and too clear for comfort. The night before he had had his first taste of hallucinations—on a beach south of Rhodes town. A treacherous beach; he had found a line of rock just under the low water mark which would have ripped jagged holes in the landing craft. At the top of the beach he had slithered under a cactus to dodge a sentry. Then Willmott had turned and seen a huge aircraft hangar. Beside it, a reservoir glimmered. So much for Intelligence maps, he had thought sarcastically.

But as he moved towards it, the reservoir had vanished. It had become a strip of road. It was a night mirage.

And the big hangar, when he moved another step or two closer, had turned out to be the wall of a small shed standing only a few paces away.

Then, on the way back, just as he was striking out for the canoe, the torches had started flashing ashore. The sentries had clustered at the water's edge, shining their torches to and fro on the beach and in the shallows. The torches probed an occasional flash seawards.

On this third and last night Willmott doubted if he would have had enough strength left for the long swim in and the hours of exploring. It would have been risking more than himself to have tried. The whole surprise of the invasion depended on not being caught, or seen, or even leaving a trace.

It was a crystal night. By 3.15 in the morning—the time they'd agreed for their rendezvous—Willmott was paddling about half a mile offshore, waiting for Courtney's signal. There were no rumbling trucks to relieve the monotony, no country sounds, no lights. Not even a house to engage the eye. Just a barren shore receding into open country. Willmott kept checking his drift delicately with the paddle and held the canoe head-on to reduce its silhouette.

Twenty minutes went by without a peep of light from the shore. Then, suddenly, a dog barked—a terrier, shrill, outraged, insistent. Its furious yapping came from the beach, and it was almost certainly Courtney who was the cause. With his ears following the sound Willmott could practically see the dog dancing excitedly at the top of the beach, announcing to the sentries where a man lay still in the water.

The barking stopped. His canoe lay as still in the now pregnant darkness as a boat on a pond, without a ripple to rock it. He kept his eyes steadily ahead for the torch signal. None came.

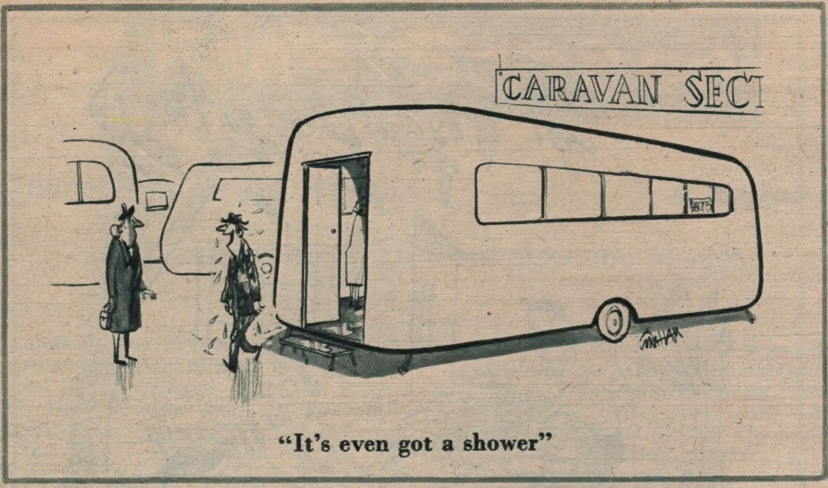
A long while later, it seemed, he heard the whistle. Willmott sat very still. Again the whistle sounded, low, conspiratorial.

Courtney's torch might have failed. Or had they caught him? Was this a ruse to tempt him in, to catch him alive, too?

He took up the tommy gun, cocked the bolt, and lay it across his knees. He could see no one. The upper beach was in shadow.

Risking the trap was risking the invasion. But—if it *were* Courtney, and he left him standing there. . . .

A canoe, bows-on, would be a hard target for them. If it were a trap, there was a good chance of backing and shooting his way out. Or so he told himself.



"It's even got a shower"

He began to paddle towards the beach. Suddenly the dog barked again. As Willmott came closer in, he was certain of being watched. And he couldn't see anything—not even the dog, insisting so shrilly that something was wrong. At any moment he expected the searchlight to snap on and blind him, to hear the abrupt rattle of machine-guns and see the tracer come reaching out towards him. As he came in close he stopped paddling and let the canoe glide. He was maybe fifty yards out. He lifted the tommy gun.

There was the whistle again. Quieter this time. Whoever it was could see him, and felt sure of him. He trained his tommy gun in the direction of the sound. Awkwardly he drifted the canoe towards the dim sand.

He saw a figure standing in the shallows. The shadow stood motionless, crouched and ape-like.

Then the figure saw him. It staggered forward, and he could hear it now panting loudly. It *was* Courtney, in a mess. He fell and floundered to the canoe, and there was a terrible moment as he tried to haul himself in. On his second try he made it. He lay there heaving behind Willmott.

"Cramp!" he gasped. "Damn near did for me!"

"Quiet." Willmott murmured it gently. He dared not take his eyes off the beach.

But still the shore ignored them. The barking of the dog rose on a note of despair as they backed away.

The next day Willmott examined their last beach through the periscope. They lay about a mile offshore. At each end of the shore stood a fort, housing what looked like an 88-millimetre battery.

They had worked around to the southern tip of the beach when the submarine suddenly jarred. They scraped loudly over a shoal, lurched hard, broke suddenly free of it, zoomed upward, and broke the surface. The Triumph came out of the sea into the brightness of day, right under the southern fort.

HOLIDAYS--5

I dislike feeling at home when I am abroad.

G. Bernard Shaw

It seemed impossible that in broad daylight they would not be spotted. Astonishingly there was not a movement from the fort. The submarine dived fast and scuttled for the sea.

Was it possible that the lookouts had taken it for one of their own submarines, refusing to believe it could be anything else?

To whatever miracle they owed the escape, it was the last straw for Sam Woods, the Triumph's captain. "That's the lot," he said briefly. "We've pressed our luck far enough."

When Lieutenant-Commander Willmott reached Cairo he went straight to Planning Headquarters, displayed himself alive and intact to the admiral, then tucked his legs under his office chair and fell to work on his reports. He had come back with piles of Intelligence. He had justified his idea, not least of all to himself, and its vindication was wholly sweet.

Then one of those terrible things happened, one of the many examples of war's immeasurable extravagance.

The invasion of Rhodes was cancelled.

The bright auguries that decorated the New Year of 1941 had vanished. They had been swept away in a few dramatic weeks by the appearance of Rommel in the desert. By mid-April his columns had driven right through to Sollum, isolating Tobruk. Another victorious German lunge through Yugoslavia was toppling the Allies from their last foothold in Europe.

And the navy was assembling its few landing craft, not to invade Rhodes, but to evacuate Greece.

Courtney was thunderstruck at all this. "And me heaving into the sea!"

This was a confession that brought Willmott's head round from studying a chart. He looked at the bluff Courtney, smiled, and had his revenge.

"Well, well," he said mockingly. "You'll end up with ulcers if you worry like that."

His principal souvenir of Rhodes was the D.S.O. With this pat on the back, the navy appeared to dismiss his bold reconnaissance ideas; or, at least, to shelve them for the next twelve months. Willmott was doomed by his rare expertise in navigation to be hired out to whichever Middle East unit clamoured most effectively for the service of an odd-jobbing guide.

Courtney was luckier. He, too, was decorated for Rhodes—with the Military Cross. His work also found favour with the army, who thought the idea of scouting beaches good. It was troops who suffered most from messed-up landings. And so, not long after, the burly Courtney was putting up a third pip and busying himself to form a new Commando unit. It had one of those deliberately stodgy names—the Special Boat Section—but it was destined to earn a romantic renown of its own.

Only a couple of sharper sorties enlivened Willmott's odd-jobbing as a navigator. One of these was a raid on the tiny island of Kupho near the south-eastern tip of Crete. The object of the raid was to wreck a radar station and capture its code books.

While they were planning this raid, Naval Intelligence in Alexandria produced, from among the hundreds of refugees from Crete, a native of the very island they were to attack.

He was stocky, dark, voluble, with a swagger and a sunny smile. His name was Antonopoulo.

Antonopoulo assured Willmott: "Kupho—I know it, the beaches, the hills, the tides, the rocks, like this hand. Every pebble, every inlet, every current I know. . ."

It became clear when Antonopoulo took breath that he would have to be restrained from telling the story of his life. It boded ill for the security of a raid like this. If they engaged him as their guide, the news would be all over Alexandria within a few hours.

No sooner had Antonopoulo been enrolled and received his first piastres as a Commando than a couple of police bore down on him out of nowhere and dragged him, yelling at the outrage of it, off to the lock-up. A charge had been trumped up, of drunkenness and café-wrecking, to keep him muzzled, under arrest, until they sailed.

At the last hour Willmott appeared at his cell door in a towering rage against the idiots who had imprisoned his guide. He commanded his instant release. Antonopoulo came ranting and triumphant out of prison, spreading a wake of farewells and invective behind him.

They sailed for Kupho that night.

There were two destroyers, each carrying a marine platoon. The idea was that Willmott and their native guide should go ashore in a dinghy, spy out a good landing place, and signal in the cutters containing the troops.

They stood off Kupho on a quiet, velvety night. The dinghy moved slowly with muffled oars away from the destroyer's dark bulk. A rating rowed. For once Antonopoulo needed no injunction from Willmott to be silent. He huddled motionless.

"We're getting close," Willmott whispered. He jogged the fisherman. "There it is. How do we steer?"

There was no answer. Willmott waited and then asked again.

After a while, between quick gasps, a voice faltered, "Me—no know. No know! Never be here before!" Antonopoulo crawled in the bottom of the boat. "Please! We go home?"

The startled rating lost an oar and grappled for it. The boat rocked as Willmott grabbed at the little Greek and sought to gag him with his hand. "We'll get you home," he whispered. "Just shut up." Then he said to the oarsman: "Carry on!" He would have to rely on his memory-study of the place.

They crept in close. Willmott found the beach and signalled in the landing craft.

The guns opened up just after he heard the splash of muffled oars and saw the cutters looming towards him. The chatter of the machine-guns crackled into life in unison, abruptly. They came from the cliffs, and he heard the bullets about him hiss in the sea. The boats swished past him, oars sweeping furiously, and grounded. The figures leaped from them and fanned across the beach. The firing grew sporadic. There were odd bursts of fire and a distant shout, some grenade explosions and then a total and eerie silence.

Out of the silence came the last eruption which was the kill. A great flame lit the hill, showed the whole island, as the radar station went up.

Before long the troops were back, manhandling a safe. They heaved it into one of the boats and pushed off. A man turned and gave Willmott the thumbs-up sign.

The congratulation was premature.

Out at sea, where the destroyers waited like hounds in their traps, too eager for the race home to begin, the falls securing one of the returning cutters carried away as they hauled her inboard. The boat tipped, dangling stern down, and ploughed the water as the destroyer gathered way. The safe in the stern sheets rolled out, whacked the water, and sank.

A circle of foam in the dark water marked where the sea had taken custody of the precious Axis codes.

Back in Alexandria, a somewhat garbled version of Antonopoulo's hand in the raid spread among the refugee community. It seemed it was he who blew up the radar station.

But for Willmott all this was only a sideshow. The big challenge had yet to come. In June, 1942, he was summoned back to England to join the staff of the newly created Chief of Combined Operations.

The first task of the new staff had a name—Operation Torch. The plan would involve an Anglo-American armada.

It was for the invasion of North Africa.

NEXT WEEK: Our invasion survives a fantastic muddle

Bill Strutton and Michael Pearson's book will be published next June at 16s. by Hodder and Stoughton. It will be called "Party Inhuman"

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Plenty For All
In The Communist Family
Lady Nicotine
The Mighty Dollar
There's Room At The Top, So
It's A Stiff Climb, But
Headache For The Boss
A Kind Thought
Grandpa's Game
Down Came The Deluge And
Asking For More
For The Pensioner
Newfangled Contraption
Going Up
Alarming
How He Escaped
Across The Atlantic
Had A Wonderful Time

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

To Rescue ....
.... On The Phone
The Cyprus ....
Flummoxed The ....
Dirty Old ....
The..................Before Us

RULES 1. First Prize for best Bullet received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed at 6d. per Bullet. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated Sept. 28), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, September 14, for early news of Bullets No. 2,105 result.)

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